I MODELLI DI VIRTÙ: MYTHOLOGICAL HEROES IN THE ART OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Victoria Heidy Ehrlich

January 2017

I MODELLI DI VIRTÙ: MYTHOLOGICAL HEROES IN THE ART OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE

Victoria Heidy Ehrlich, Ph. D.

Cornell University 2017

Images of mythological heroes, the half-mortal descendants of pagan deities, abounded in the visual culture of Florence. Whether wrought in stone, depicted on canvas, or articulated in numerous other mediums, depictions of valiant deeds and those who accomplished them were commissioned and collected in growing numbers. While the sixteenth century saw the production of large-scale painted narrative cycles depicting their various exploits as recounted in ancient texts, this interest in the representation of heroes had its iconographic roots in the previous century. My dissertation considers the role of mythological heroes in the visual construction of the heroic ideal in Quattrocento Florence. I argue that changing notions of virtue and a robust culture of exemplarity inherited from ancient and medieval traditions influenced the reception of mythological heroes and account for their reemergence in the visual arts of the city at this time. This type of hero, I maintain, served as a model of civic virtue at a moment when secular ideals began informing public identity. Definitions of the hero changed over time. By examining the reception and resonances of the figures of Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus—three mythological heroes who enjoyed significant symbolic ties to the Republic of Florence in the fifteenth century—this study highlights and attempts to rebuild the nexus of literary and visual precedents

that together provided the foundation for the mythological hero's visual prominence in the expansive painted narratives and large sculptures of the next century. These three heroes were selected for closer study in this context in part due to their presence in greater numbers in the visual record than other mythological heroes at the time. In tracing a classical theme from its representational origins in material culture, often located within the domestic or private sphere, to its eventual imbrication within the monumental arts commissioned for public spaces, my research situates mythological heroes and their representation in the Quattrocento within the social fabric of Florence and moves beyond a Medicean-centric context that has frequently framed discussions of classical reception in Florentine culture.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Victoria received her Bachelor of Arts in Greek and Roman Civilization with a concentration in Mediterranean art and archaeology from the State University of New York at Albany in 2003, graduating Magna cum laude. During her five-year tenure as an elementary and middle school teacher in Texas following graduation, she completed her Master of Arts in Humanities at the University of Texas at Arlington (2007). Under the supervision of Mary Vaccaro, she concentrated on Italian Renaissance art and wrote a thesis entitled, "Perception and Presentation: Mythological Imagery and the Female Gaze in Italian Renaissance Art." Victoria completed her Master of Arts (2012) and her Doctor of Philosophy in the History of Art and Visual Studies at Cornell University. Her scholarship was supervised by Claudia Lazzaro, along with committee members Annetta Alexandridis and John M. Najemy. Victoria's interests in Italian Renaissance art include the impact of humanism on painting, printmaking and sculpture, antiquity and collecting, as well as Florentine history. Her work takes into consideration issues of gender and focuses in particular on classical mythology and its representation in early modern visual culture.

For my hero, Justin, without whose encouragement, patience, and love this project would have been an impossible labor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A project of this magnitude could not have come to fruition without the support of many people and institutions. I would like to thank my advisor and mentor, Claudia Lazzaro, for her generous feedback and shrewd advice at all stages of my academic journey. That she gave so much of her time, energy, and expertise to my development as a scholar, writer, and teacher is an invaluable gift. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Annetta Alexandridis and John M. Najemy, whose perspectives and insights continually fueled my curiosity and prompted me to consider new angles and possibilities in my research. Each of the accomplished scholars on my committee—my Superhero Squad—has left an indelible mark on my work, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

My dissertation research has benefited enormously from various sources of funding, including a Michele Sicca grant that provided generous support for a summer research trip to Florence. I am likewise appreciative of the Cornell Graduate School, which provided financial support so that I might present my scholarship at conferences here and abroad, and ensured that I was able to attend a valuable summer language and archival research workshop hosted by the Medici Archive Project in Florence. A Provost's Diversity Fellowship gave me an unfettered period of time in which to transform my many pages of notes into cohesive chapters. I would also like to acknowledge the many wonderful librarians, archivists, and museum staff in Florence, particularly those of the Kunsthistorisches Institut, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, the Biblioteca Riccardiana, the Archivio di Stato, and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, whose patience and expertise enhanced my research experience and contributed to the productivity of each research trip.

To my fellow history of art graduate students who became my closest friends – thank you for the coffee breaks and stimulating conversations we had on our beloved

library bench so far above Cayuga's waters. I will forever cherish those restorative moments. I will likewise always be indebted to Keeley and Jessica—you are the very heart of the department.

Finally, I wish to thank my loving family. As a first-generation American, I have always drawn strength from my parents' determination and fortitude. I appreciate their many sacrifices, as well as the values they instilled in me—from the lessons learned through physical labor on the farm I love so much, to the importance of embracing the opportunity to attain a world-class education. Only my husband of twelve years, however, has experienced the journey to this moment as keenly and as intimately as I have. Together, we have marveled at the lakes, gorges, and waterfalls along this winding path, and together we have battled hydras in order to reach the next breathtaking vista. Thank you, Justin.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Images of mythological heroes, the half-mortal descendants of pagan deities, abounded in the visual culture of Florence. Whether wrought in stone, depicted on canvas, or articulated in numerous other mediums, depictions of valiant deeds and those who accomplished them were commissioned and collected in growing numbers. While the sixteenth century saw the production of large-scale painted narrative cycles depicting their various exploits as recounted in ancient texts, this interest in the representation of heroes had its iconographic roots in the previous century. My dissertation considers the role of mythological heroes in the visual construction of the heroic ideal in Quattrocento Florence. I argue that changing notions of virtue and a robust culture of exemplarity inherited from ancient and medieval traditions influenced the reception of mythological heroes and account for their reemergence in the visual arts of the city at this time. This type of hero, I maintain, served as a model of civic virtue at a moment when secular ideals began informing public identity.

Previous scholarship of mythological heroes in fifteenth-century Florence has focused almost exclusively on the figure of Hercules, stressing his significance as the symbol of the city and his subsequent appropriation by the Medici family. Studies of artists who specialized in the production of these types of subjects have also appeared in the last few decades, among which the monographs on Bertoldo di Giovanni by James Draper, the Pollaiuolo brothers by Alison Wright, and Apollonio di Giovanni by Ellen Callman have contributed to our understanding of how classical motifs could be adapted and deployed.[1] The significance of mythological heroes as

[1] For the studies mentioned, see James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992); Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

a distinct group within the larger tradition of heroic imagery, which was also comprised of martial saints, biblical luminaries and historical leaders, has remained a lacuna in the scholarship. My dissertation addresses this gap by interpreting heroes from mythological contexts in terms that privilege their unique placement at the point where ideas of virtue become intertwined with notions of civic duty and aligned with the ideals of humanist thought.

Definitions of the hero changed over time, and by examining the reception and resonances of the figures of Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus—three mythological heroes who enjoyed significant symbolic ties to the Republic of Florence in the fifteenth century—the discourse that follows highlights and attempts to rebuild the nexus of literary and visual precedents that together provided the foundation for the mythological hero's visual prominence in the expansive painted narratives and large sculptures of the next century. These three heroes were selected for closer study in this context in part due to their presence in greater numbers in the visual record than other mythological heroes at the time. Theseus, Perseus, and Jason, for instance, do not factor with any regularity in the visual sphere of fifteenth century Florence, though they are more frequently represented in the High Renaissance. In tracing a classical theme from its representational origins in material culture, often located within the domestic or private sphere, to its eventual imbrication within the monumental arts commissioned for public spaces, my research situates mythological heroes and their representation in the Quattrocento within the social fabric of Florence and moves beyond a Medicean-centric context that has frequently framed discussions of classical reception in Florentine culture.

Supporting evidence for the arguments that follow is drawn from a variety of sources that include the writings and commentaries of prominent Florentine humanists, educators, and statesmen. For example, the works of Coluccio Salutati, Cristoforo Landino, Marsilio Ficino, and

Poggio Bracciolini are particularly germane to the development of my contextual analyses, since each of these four, in their letters, commentaries, and lectures, repeatedly invoke the examples of Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus as exemplars of ideal virtue. The primary audience for their writings and lectures was comprised of students, fellow humanists, and citizens who were expected to play important roles in the governance of the city. When read against the visualization of mythological heroes in art of the republic, these writings enhance our understanding of the potential range of meanings and purposes to which such representations might be put. Petrarch, often cited as the father of humanism, likewise figures significantly within my pool of visual and literary supporting evidence, since his views on poetry and the illustrations of his popular poems known as the *Triumphs* contribute much to our understanding of the conceptualization of fame in the fifteenth century. Supplementary evidence, such as early modern inventories, ancient accounts, and biographical sketches, rounds out the literary dimension of my argument.

The primary visual sources analyzed in each chapter range in medium and scale, and include illuminated manuscripts, small- to medium-sized sculptures and reliefs, ancient coins, gems, fresco cycles (some still existing and others no longer extant), and cassone panels. When the objects considered are no longer extant, I rely on visual and verbal reconstructions as provided in both contemporary and modern accounts of the works and their original contexts. The diverse range of objects considered in this study demonstrates the extent to which imagery of mythological heroes proliferated in the visual culture of the Renaissance, and sheds light on the growing demand for such figures on the part of Florentine citizens.

As I show, this demand was closely linked to new educational objectives within the humanist curriculum that were intended to aid students in developing the secular, moral virtues

and rhetorical strategies that would serve them well as they undertook civic responsibilities and public roles. Additionally, a collective preoccupation with defying the earthly condition, a feat that had, in previous centuries, been accomplished in terms of gaining eternal life in heaven by following a life of Christian piety, was now amended. In addition to heavenly glory, the quest for immortality could be modeled upon the virtuous actions of mythological heroes, whose subsequent fame had survived the ages through poetic transmission. This merging of the ancient Greek understanding of *kleos*, or fame, with the civic duty valued in the Roman republic, while not discounting Christian piety in this formulation, truly sets apart notions of virtue as understood in the early decades of the Renaissance from medieval constructions. Even more significantly, this revaluation of the heroic brings into relief the important role of mythological heroes, like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus, in effecting this reformulation of virtue, fame, and the role of personal morality in one's life. This in turn illuminates the centrality of visual imagery in the Renaissance individual's quest to attain the delicate balance required of the *summum bonum*, or ideal life, in Quattrocento Florence.

My dissertation is comprised of a chapter dedicated to tracing the changing definitions and visualizations of the heroic over time, which is followed by chapters focusing on each of the three aforementioned mythological heroes and their visual representation. The first chapter considers the development of heroic iconography as a genre, focusing on the presentation of mythological heroes in illustrated world chronicles, where they stood alongside biblical and historical figures representing the ages of man. Moving next to large-scale depictions of famous men in monumental wall paintings of the Palazzo della Signoria and other civic spaces in the city, I suggest that, when read in concert with the literary genre documenting the lives of illustrious individuals, these frescos operated as visual parallels to an epideictic rhetorical

tradition that praised virtue and condemned vice. Additionally, this chapter addresses the changing ideals that together contributed to how the term *hero* was defined over time, and which of these elements remained constant or were uniquely adapted to Florentine sensibilities. The second chapter is devoted to a comprehensive study of Aeneas, whose adventures were well known in educated circles by way of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Coinciding with the immense popularity of this Roman epic was a renewed interest in Aeneas as an artistic subject. An analysis of painted marriage panels and an illuminated manuscript that featured this hero's journey to Italian shores foregrounds the importance of allegorical readings by Florentine humanists that championed Virgil's hero as the consummate representative of the *summum bonum*.

A second case study, presented in the third chapter, interrogates the role of Hercules in the city of Florence, where he served not only as the physical model of the ideal hero, but also as a symbolic evocation of family identity. In my examination of the decorative programs of the Benizzi, Spinelli, and Gondi households, I argue for the malleability of Herculean imagery, which could be creatively arranged to signify important sources of familial pride, such as economic prosperity, while simultaneously aligning family units with the republican ideals of the city. While scholars have long been aware of the Herculean-centric decorations commissioned by these wealthy Florentine families for their homes, most have been considered only briefly and in passing by art historians, whose interest in the role of Hercules in Florence has largely been bound up with the Medici family and/or its relationship to the republic of Florence. The Spinelli and Gondi commissions have been treated, if summarily, in the architectural histories of their respective palaces, but both examples require a more sustained engagement in order to be located properly within the larger context of Herculean imagery and visual culture of fifteenth-century

Florence.[2] Thus, the choice to highlight the way these three families engaged with Hercules and attributes related to his spectacular deeds in order to foreground their own reputation within the civic sphere of the city is predicated on the fact that such an examination is crucial to reconstructing the multi-dimensional ways in which the traditional hero of Florence could be made to signify.

The fourth chapter presents a study of the various social and philosophical contexts in which the hero Orpheus offered a model for productive engagements with the arts. I propose that Orphic iconography was circumscribed within the city's cultural nucleus, and must therefore be read within the visual and aural dimensions of that locus. Artistic representations of Orpheus were intimately related to Neoplatonic ideals, as represented by Ficino and his circle, while the evocation of Orpheus through related imagery reveals a more popular dimension in the reception of Orphic imagery as indicated by its evocation in musical and ritual contexts.

An important theme that wends its way through each of these three case studies throws into relief contemporary ideas of virtue as reflected in the often-ambiguous status of heroes, who could also represent the boundary that separated nature from culture. Though frequently cast as models of civic order, Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus nevertheless occupied the liminal space at the borders of civilization. Neither fully human nor fully god, their natures, as depicted by artists and described by humanists, vacillated between the opposing Aristotelian ideas of brutishness and superhuman virtue. This ambiguity is one of the unifying features of this particular category of heroic individuals—the mythological demi-god—and distinguishes all three considered here from their historical cohort of heroes comprised of the ancient, biblical, and sainted.

---

[2] Andreas Tönnesmann, *Der Palazzo Gondi in Florenz* (Worms: Werner'schen Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983); Philip Jacks and William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

My dissertation contributes a synthetic view into the origins and development of heroic imagery in fifteenth-century Florence, complementing past scholarship that has largely focused on the evolution of these subjects in later Renaissance art. By employing semiotic analysis and reception theory, I conclude that classical ideals, reanimated by the brand of civic humanism extolled in Florence during this period, directly influenced contemporary notions of heroic virtue, which in turn, contributed to its visual vocabulary. This project intervenes in debates that have questioned reliance upon texts and humanistic discourses in the interpretation of Renaissance art. Recent trends in art historical thought have shied away from perspectives first introduced and modified by the discipline's early giants. Erwin Panofsky in particular, whose approach to the interpretation of Renaissance art relies in large part on the interpretation of iconography as read against literary sources, whether contemporary or ancient, has largely been dismissed in recent decades in favor of approaches that privilege the social history of the object, both for its materiality and its visual reception. The argument developed in this dissertation instead brings together a variety of perspectives, from iconographic and formal considerations to social and material histories, in order to sketch a coherent picture of the systematic visual deployment and understandings of mythological heroes in fifteenth-century Florence.

CHAPTER 1

TIME, FAME, AND VIRTUE: TRACING THE DIMENSIONS OF THE HEROIC IDEAL IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter considers key artistic developments that originated in the early fourteenth century and contributed to the formation of the heroic ideal and its visualization in fifteenth-century Florence. A robust cultural emphasis on the practice of emulating heroic individuals of the past in order to spur the development of virtuous qualities created an environment conducive to the reception and proliferation of these mythological demi-gods. The practice of placing before the eye images of famous men, and then contemplating the actions that led to their fame contributed to the increased demand for works of art that featured Florentine favorites, like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus. By placing this type of imagery in conversation with contemporary literary and philosophical traditions, it becomes clear that conceptions of time, the cultivation of fame, and ideas regarding the nature of virtue both anticipated and assured the mythological hero an ever more prominent role in the visual record of Florence.

This analysis enables the identification of subtle changes that the notion of what and who constituted a hero underwent during this time. Further, it results in a more precise understanding of the significant position that mythological heroes occupied within the larger panoply of famous men admired by Florentines during the century. As the importance of the secular valences of virtue grew more prevalent, due in large part to the humanistic education system that promoted civic engagement and cultural enrichment, works of art in both public and domestic spaces

increasingly began to feature mythological heroes and their virtues as subjects in their own right. This change in visualizing strategies, which had, in the fourteenth century, been comprised of heroes from mythology set alongside heroes from historical and Judaeo-Christian contexts, represents a marked shift in how mythological heroes were understood and valued beginning in the early fifteenth century. In shedding their dependency from the crowd of luminaries that once surrounded them in world chronicles, mythological heroes proved themselves, for the Quattrocento Florentine viewer, to be "good to think [with]."[3]

1.2 Evidence

This chapter brings together both visual and literary sources, originating in the ancient world, Middle Ages, and early Renaissance, for the purpose of reconstructing the heroic ideal as it was conceived and visualized by the Florentine citizenry in the decades that comprised the Quattrocento. The primary types of visual evidence to be analyzed range in size from small-scale objects, such as coins and painted depictions in manuscripts, to larger-than-life-size portraits, rendered in mediums that include fresco and sculpture. At the time of their creation, these were located in a variety of contexts that help to account for private viewing practices, such as might be undertaken in domestic studies, semi-private viewing experiences, with imagery directed to a specific type of audience and exemplified by fresco cycles in guild halls and semi-public domestic spaces, and finally, large, diverse audiences whose experiences of such imagery would primarily have taken place in civic contexts. Examining illustrated world chronicles including the Florentine Picture Chronicle, painted cycles of illustrious men, such as those of both early and late periods in the decorative programs of the signorial palace, alongside illustrated manuscripts and *cassone* panels featuring visualizations of Petrarch's *Triumphs*, a picture

[3] This phrase is borrowed from the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who coined it in his examination of the role of the animal in totemic societies. See his *La Pensée Sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962), 128.

emerges of specific visual conditions that enabled the imagery of mythological heroes to flourish in the Republic of the early Renaissance.

The argument presented in the following pages must frequently rely on written accounts of varying types in order to piece together the content of artistic commissions that are no longer extant due to changing tastes in the Renaissance or the execution of major reconstruction projects in the decades and centuries that followed. Another important role of literary evidence in this analysis is to provide an understanding of how the specific types of texts that interested humanists and influenced their educational curriculum spurred the heroic genre in the visual arts of the period. For this, collections of the biographies of worthy men based on classical models, a genre that Petrarch is credited with reintroducing in his time, are of critical importance. The writings of Greek and Roman historians, as well as their medieval and Renaissance counterparts, are likewise plumbed for their insights into the unique configuration of heroic ideals in Florence.

Finally, educational treatises and philosophical writings on the nature of time, fame, and virtue provide an additional lens into the circumstances that solidified the importance of Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus in the visual deployment of heroic figures. Their special status emerges most clearly in the humanistic practice of setting before the eye exemplary models for the cultivation of personal virtue. In this context, coins that featured the visages of ancient rulers on one side, and allegorical or mythological emblems on the other played an exceedingly important role in the artistic development of the heroic ideal.

1.3 Defining the Hero

In the Renaissance, much as it seems in our present era, the term *hero* was rarely stable, never narrow, and frequently employed with little regard for consistency; nevertheless, taking stock of its dimensions over time reveals that the heroic ideal did indeed have a history during

the early modern period. Discerning the primary factors that comprised the heroic ideal for Florence in particular is a complex exercise that requires one to examine the ancient writings that influenced these conceptions, as well as the early modern understanding of these sources. Time, fame, and virtue are so closely interwoven within the concept of the hero as gleaned from both literary and iconographic perspectives that unraveling these qualities requires a measure of patience. For example, because humanists held that fame itself described the heroic individual—with fame serving as the reward for leading a heroic, and thus virtuous, life—an individual with little public renown could technically cultivate an abundance of virtue over a lifetime and thereafter become famous, and indeed, heroic, through worthy accomplishments. The visual representation of a hero, and the correlating narrative of his or her life, thus served both to reward the individual for their virtue, ushering them into the historical timeline of famous individuals worthy of memory, and also as exemplary aids for those who sought the same treatment. Alternatively, it was entirely possible to be famous without being considered particularly virtuous or heroic. Negative exemplars could nevertheless be instructive in that they compelled the viewer to contemplate the consequences of vice in order to better avoid its destructive hold.

These ideas regarding the nature of renown were disseminated within the humanistic educational model that flourished in fifteenth-century Florence, where the study of the liberal arts itself was considered to be a path to both virtue and fame.[4] In his treatise on the importance of a humanistic education, Pier Paolo Vergerio defines the liberal arts as "those studies [. . .] which are worthy of a free man [*liber*]: they are those through which virtue and wisdom are either practiced or sought, and by which the body or mind is disposed towards all the best things.

[4] Hanna H. Gray, "Renaissance Humanism: the Pursuit of Eloquence," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24.4 (1963): 500-501, 503-504.

From this source people customarily seek honor and glory, which for the wise man are the principal rewards of virtue."[5] Within this framework, the imitation of exemplary heroic individuals through direct contemplation of visual or textual aids and indirect access via memory, was the key to cultivating the virtues necessary for attaining fame. Furthermore, humanists, in their role as teachers, believed their primary task was not only to persuade others to seek the truth and to develop virtuous natures, which could likewise be said of their medieval predecessors, whose educational imperatives were guided by the curriculum known as the *ars dictaminis*, but also to provide models for applying this knowledge in the everyday world.

This they accomplished through the art of eloquence that they assiduously cultivated from their readings of ancient models.[6] The humanist interest in developing an educational curriculum that would lead one to see the real-world utility of knowledge and then show him ways to apply said knowledge through the use of models can largely explain why the imitation of exemplars for the development of moral goodness was deemed so necessary, and why heroic figures like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus were so important to this mission. The subjects of history and poetry, into which these three heroes often figure, were considered the primary tools for persuading students of what was good and virtuous, and an effective means for providing examples of how this knowledge might be applied in one's life.[7]

1.4 Historical Understandings of the Hero

Concepts of the hero in circulation during the fifteenth century owed much to the ways in which the heroic ideal, virtue, and time had been conceptualized and reassessed in preceding epochs. This is made particularly evident when considering the importance that humanists

---

[5] Pier Paolo Vergerio, *The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth,* Ed., Trans. Craig Kallendorf, *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 29.
[6] Gray, "Renaissance Humanism," 500-501.
[7] Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990), 15-16.

ascribed to plumbing the etymological roots of terms like *hero*, as well as the origins of more specific names of heroes, like Hercules, Aeneas, and Orpheus, in their own writings and commentaries of epic poetry. In the age before Homer, during the Mycenaean era (1600-1100 BCE), *heros* referred to a lord who served the king, as well as to divine beings who were considered to be more than mere mortals, but less than immortal gods.[8] The dual dimensions of this term's usage indicate that from very early on, the hero was considered to be an ennobled individual. Just as the lord who served the king boasted a higher status than did the people who served him, the *heros* in turn was not as highly placed as the king to whom he swore his allegiance, and so occupied a kind of elevated middle ground between two opposing stations of society.

From the Mycenaean understanding can also be discerned both martial and athletic valences that, more often than not, remained fixed to the hero through the ages and into the early Renaissance. As a lord, the allegiance sworn to the king required the *heros* to ride into battle on the king's behalf, when necessary, a context which required the noble individual to possess martial skill and a warrior's athleticism in order to survive. During this era, there is also evidence to suggest that *heros* was a term that was applied in the context of death, and referred to individuals who had done deeds in life that were greater than what the average person might expect to accomplish.[9] In this instance, the word dually referred to the chthonic goddess who ruled the realm of death and those few in her protection who were of elevated status based on earthly accomplishments.

This pre-Homeric dimension of the heroic ideal was modified during the seventh century BCE, when the term *heros* became closely associated with *hemitheoi*, or half-gods, whose

[8] M. Gregory Kendrick, *The Heroic Ideal: Western Archetypes from the Greeks to the Present* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2010), 9.
[9] Kendrick, *The Heroic Ideal*, 9.

parentage consisted of both a god and a mortal. First Hesiod, and then Homer, canonized this particular usage of the term, with the extraordinary martial valor of a hero rewarded with *kleos*, a term that means praise or glory, and at that time referred even more specifically to the epic songs that relayed the actions of the hero to the generations that followed. *Kleos* was thus considered to be the vehicle for the immortalization of the demi-god—a way for the mortal half of the hero to transition fully into his immortal aspects and become divine through the glory of his song.[10] The role of memory as an agent of transmission and glorification was therefore a crucial aspect of the conceptualization of the heroic ideal in the Archaic period, as it would be again in the early Renaissance. Great deeds of the heroes were captured, relayed, and given new life in first oral, and then written, poetic narratives in which were contained their rewards of fame and immortality. These admirable acts were also memorialized in visual formats. Sculptures were frequently erected in a hero's honor, supplementing the oral and written traditions that contained his exploits.

Nobility, an earlier connotation of *heros* from the Mycenaean age, together with the hero's relationship to death, was once more an active dimension of the heroic ideal toward the conclusion of the Archaic period. By that time, famous statesmen and leaders who had displayed virtue of a civic nature in life were commemorated and worshiped by hero cults in death, joining the Homeric demi-gods of the Trojan War, as fellow worthies.[11] This parallels the fifteenth-century Florentine tradition of honoring both ancient men of worth who had made positive contributions to their societies, as well as their own famous, recently deceased, citizens, in literature and the visual arts—a point which will be considered in greater depth below. Interestingly, commemorative series of sculptures were not necessarily always comprised of the

[10] Gregory Nagy, *The Ancient Greek Hero In 24 Hours* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 26-27; Kendrick, *The Heroic Ideal*, 10.
[11] Kendrick, *The Heroic Ideal*, 11.

likenesses of truly heroic individuals. The Roman writer Pausanias, who wrote of his travels to Greece in the second century, tells of a series of sculptures erected from the fines levied upon unscrupulous athletes, whose claim to fame, or rather, infamy, was the fact that they had been caught cheating in their quest for glory.[12] Known as Zanes, these bronze statues represented Zeus and lined the areas leading up to the spaces where athletes competed. Though not made in the likenesses of the offenders, the identifying inscriptions on the statues ensured that these athletes would live on in historical infamy. Such monuments, no doubt, served as both public shaming tools and negative exemplars for the wider public.

As previously mentioned, the utility of both positive and negative exemplars was also acknowledged in the Renaissance, although it should be noted that fresco cycles of famous men in both public and private spaces in Florence did not include the infamous figures from history, only the properly heroic. This is unlike the frescoed cycle of famous men that appeared in other city-states of the Italian peninsula during the fifteenth century, as for example, in Cardinal Orsini's palace in Rome. Rather, in Florence, visualizations of negative exemplars were most often relegated to the painted sides of *cassoni*. Because the depictions on these objects, which were commissioned in the context of nuptial celebrations, functioned in a didactic capacity, the inclusion of negative models that represented behaviors and qualities best avoided was a natural fit. Otherwise, cycles in both the public and domestic spheres of Florence deliberately featured only heroic individuals admired for their virtues, whether from the ancient or recent past, whose exemplary lives served viewers in a beneficial way as they undertook to cultivate their own better natures.

---

[12] Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1)* Translated by W. H. S. Jones, H. A. Ormerod, Loeb Classical Library 188 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 5. 21. 2-22; Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, "Poggio and Visual Tradition: 'Uomini Famosi' in Classical Literary Description," *Artibus et Historiae,* 12 (1985): 71.

In the archaic period in Greece, the practice of emulation was integral to the worship of heroes, both Homeric and contemporary, as it would again become in fifteenth-century Florence. Plato's diatribe against the poets and the products of their pens indicates to a certain extent the degree to which the exemplary nature of the hero suffused the collective imagination of the public in his own time. In his *Republic*, the philosopher (himself an educator) laments the extent to which the poets, particularly Hesiod and Homer, were relied upon in his time to inform the populace on matters of worthy conduct, and so Socrates advises that this kind of epic poetry with subjects largely comprised of the warring gods and heroes, be banned from the ideal republic. At the root of his decision were two important ideas that were later picked up by Florentine humanists: first, that imitation, or *mimesis*, was a powerful force for shaping behavior and attitude in individuals, particularly the young; and second, that the heroes and gods of Hesiod and Homer frequently behaved in ways that were not in the best interest of citizens who looked to them for guidance in the ideal republic.

On the first point, the powerful role of imitation and memory in shaping character and behavior should not be underestimated in Plato's mind, which is why his interlocutor, Socrates, suggests that poetry itself continue to be used, but that the stories contained within be approved and judged as conducive to producing good character—so those that would champion fortitude, instill a sense of justice, and encourage moderate behavior in all spheres of life—by an oversight committee. As for the second point, Socrates reluctantly concedes that while gods and heroes behaving badly or fighting amongst themselves might have some allegorical value, it should not be assumed in the least that the great majority of the populace, most especially the young, would be wise enough to discern the virtue of what, on the surface, represented atrocious behavior on the part of the heroes. Continuously hearing or reading about these types of misguided actions

would ingrain in children (who would soon grow to be adults) behaviors that were ill-suited and even detrimental to the common good. Achilles especially should be avoided, since he frequently emoted and raged in ways that were incompatible with promoting the value of rational, philosophical thought.[13] Unlike Plato, Florentine scholars were exceptionally open to employing allegory, among other literary strategies, to arrive at an edifying understanding of ancient heroic narratives and their actors. It was primarily through this approach, in fact, that humanists were able to defend the utility of ancient writings, particularly ancient poetry, in a Christian world.

These two types of heroes—contemporary or near-contemporary individuals of renown, commemorated after death by religious devotees and statues bearing their likeness, and semi-divine strongmen whose deeds were remembered in *kleos*, or heroic song—co-existed as representatives of the heroic ideal throughout the Roman era, at which time *virtus* became another increasingly important factor in the conceptualization of the hero. For the Roman hero, *virtus* consisted of *pietas*, first and foremost. *Pietas*, a quality which set Virgil's hero Aeneas apart from his Homeric counterparts (both Hector and Achilles, as well as the Greek Herakles), was comprised of honor in martial action, sacrifice for the civic body and family, and according the gods what was properly due them. What was meant when Roman writers used the term *virtus*, then, was an upstanding male figure, or *vir*, whose service to the state and family was envisioned as a kind of piety that honored the gods and provided earthly fame for the hero.[14]

By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the heroic ideal inherited from ancient Greece and Rome had been mostly divested of its pagan origins due to the intervening centuries. In the middle ages, for instance, Hercules donned a knightly armor and was firmly ensconced within

[13] Plato, *Republic, Volume I: Books 1-5,* Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy. Loeb Classical Library 237 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 3. 388a-b.
[14] Cicero, *On the Republic. On the Laws,* Translated by Clinton W. Keyes, Loeb Classical Library 213 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 5. 9.

the chivalric tradition that proliferated and dictated (or reflected) socially acceptable behavior for the noble classes through a Christian lens. Thus, the mythological demi-god himself was cast as a knight in the medieval period, which enabled him to gallop safely into the Renaissance.[15] Christian virtue was the key to knightly culture, and this was comprised of service to others, in the service of Christian glory.

Humanist discourse beginning with Petrarch in the fourteenth century, and then taken up in the years that followed by Salutati, Landino, and Ficino, shifted how these types of heroes were imagined. Mythological heroes were once again envisioned in their original pagan guises, and allegorical exegesis and etymological excavation provided these figures with moral value but also restored to them their historic origins. Whether understood euhemeristically, as Petrarch and Salutati had, or as valuable ways to think about civic honor and service, as Landino did, or even as a way to conceptualize one's path to divine harmony, as was the case with Ficino, mythological heroes were valuable to think with. These Florentine reconstructions presented the hero as an exemplar of not just one type of virtue, as was the case with the heroic saint, but a variety of options that would help to shape the educated citizen's personal ethics, and allow themselves to yearn for a kind of immortality that was not only linked to Christian glory, but also to an earthly promise of fame.

1.5 Temporal Dimension of Fame and Virtue

As indicated by Vergerio, in the Renaissance, both fame and the cultivation of virtue depended upon time, and as such, were positioned within a temporal dimension. This fact is particularly well illustrated in Petrarch's *Triumphs*. The triumph of Time, which follows close on the heels of the triumph of Fame, is able to preserve only the most virtuous names from being

[15] Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972), 103-109.

erased from memory in short order, and eventually, even those will be forgotten. Illustrations of this personification frequently portray Time as an aged man with a white beard, leaning heavily on walking sticks. (Fig. 1.1) In keeping with this trend, Apollonio's depiction of Time in a manuscript of 1442 presents a winged variation, which no doubt refers to flight of Time as it endeavors to relegate the famous to obscurity. In his left hand, Time holds a sphere that represents his dominion over the earthly desires for individual immortality. The message is clear—those who seek Fame do so at their own peril and heartache, because even those who find it will eventually be consigned to the destruction of memory.

Evidence of Petrarch's particularly ambivalent relationship with Time as it relates to earthly fame emerges often in his somewhat embittered verses about its ruinous nature. This concept, in the poet's estimation, should truly have been more allied with fame, because certainly even the reputations of ancient poets and leaders had been preserved to his own day. In the end, it revealed itself to be an enemy, largely due to the Christian framework that he employed in the organization of his poem. In this scheme, the desire for a secular, individualistic kind of immortality—Fame—is overshadowed by the Triumph of Glory, which promises ever-lasting life after earthly death. That he envied the ancient writers their freedom from this kind of temporal obliteration is clear, but for a man of his religious devotion, Eternal Glory had naturally to serve as the final triumph—powerful enough to trump even Fame.

The cultivation of virtue was central to achieving status as a hero, so it is no surprise that heroism itself was considered to be an indication of virtue. Aristotle, with his philosophy of morality outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is largely responsible for the close relationship fourteenth- and fifteenth-century humanists noted between virtue and the heroic. In a section that enumerates three lowly moral states, the philosopher maintains that brutishness is counter-

balanced by the state of super-human virtue, which "is a heroic and divine kind of virtue, as Homer has represented Priam as saying of Hector that he was very good, 'For he seemed not, he, the child of a mortal man, but as one that of God's seed came.'"[16] He goes on to clarify that super-human virtue and its opposite moral state, brutishness, respectively soar above and fall below the precepts he has delineated for virtue and vice. Thus, the hero is singular and set off from the rest because he is armed with super-human virtue, and while he is essentially inimitable by Aristotle's own admission – "since it is rarely that a godlike man is found" – he is absolutely worthy of imitation by those who seek to improve their own moral state.[17]

Cristoforo Landino, in his commentary to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, echoes Aristotelian concepts of heroic virtue when he writes that the opposite of brutishness is "heroic virtue, that is, more than human [virtue], because heroes are, according to the ancients, more than man and less than gods, like Hercules or Theseus and similar [figures]."[18] He goes on to clarify that men are positioned between the angels and the beasts, "because with these he shares the intellect, and with those, the senses."[19]

In embracing Aristotelian precepts for virtue, humanists reconfigured earlier ideas on the ethics of morality. In particular, the views of the early Christian theologian, Augustine of Hippo, and the thirteenth-century Dominican priest and philosopher, Thomas Aquinas, were adapted to make room for a new champion of virtue—the mythological hero. In the tenth book of his *City of*

[16] Aristotle, W. D. Ross, J. L. Ackrill, and J O. Urmson, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7. 1.
[17] Aristotle et al., *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 7. 1.
[18] Translation mine, from "Contro a queste tre vitiose dispositioni sono optimi rimedii. Imperochè alla incontinentia è opposta la continentia, alla malitia la virtù morale, alla bestialità la virtù heroica, cioè più che humana, perchè "heroes" sono, secondo gl'antichi, più che huomini, et meno che dii, chome fu Hercole et Theseo et simili." Cristoforo Landino (1481), *Inferno* 11.79-81, Dartmouth Dante Project, accessed April 30, 2016.
[19] Translation mine, from "Ma perchè intendiamo onde acquista l'huomo la virtù heroica, non ci debba essere incognito che l'animo humano è in mezo tra gl'angeli et gli animali bruti. Imperochè con quegli ha comune lo 'ntellecto, et con questi e sensi." Cristoforo Landino (1481), *Inferno* 11.79-81, Dartmouth Dante Project, accessed April 30, 2016.

God, Augustine had specifically excluded pagan men of worth from his roster of worthy models for Christians to emulate.[20] He contended that Christian martyrs were infinitely more appropriate to serve as guides for virtue than the heroic men of pagan mythologies, since the former vanquished the demons that sought to undermine the city of God. For one whose admiration of the Trojan hero, Aeneas, was considerable and passionate from an early age, this redefinition of the constructs of virtue was significant, and prompted by his conversion to Christianity in Milan during the fourth century CE.[21]

Thomas Aquinas, writing in the thirteenth century, combined aspects of both Augustinian and Aristotelian ideas, which resulted in a system of morality that included both theological, or infused, virtues, as Aquinas dubs them, and the cardinal virtues.[22] The theological virtues consisted of faith, hope, and charity, and were superior to the cardinal virtues of temperance, justice, prudence, and fortitude, because they were divinely proffered and received. While all men, even the pagan luminaries, were in a position to develop moral goodness based on the cardinal virtues, followers of the Christian faith were blessed with the supernatural gifts of the theological virtues that allowed one to achieve the ultimate happiness, beatitude, when united with God. From Aquinas, Florentine humanists accepted that virtue could be understood best as a habit that inclined one to do good in a quest for happiness, whether in intellect or in spirit. Circumscribed within this definition is an understanding that virtue is an action that must be repeated over time and is motivated by the desire to effect a beneficial change in the nature of the person who practices this habituated act. This characterization of virtue was mirrored also in the visual realm, where repeated viewing of the likenesses of virtuous individuals would lead to the

[20] Augustine, *City of God, Volume III: Books 8-11,* Translated by David S. Wiesen, Loeb Classical Library 413. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968),10. 21.
[21] Augustine and Henry Chadwick, *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1. 20-29.
[22] Shawn Floyd, "Thomas Aquinas: Moral Philosophy," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/, Retrieved April 30, 2016.

viewer's own moral development. Observing images of such persons and acts over time was essential, in that it could be preserved within the viewer's memory, and then contemplated even when the image was not before the eyes. In this way, virtue was understood to be almost a muscle, where repeated exercise would cause the individual to become more able to achieve an ideal state of virtue.

Evidence that many Florentine humanists rejected Augustine's version of the hero, which was based upon the notion that heroic death, passively endured for the glory of God's kingdom, was superior to death actively sought for the civic good, and in accordance with Aristotle's definition, can be discerned from the complex debate regarding the inherent emulative worth of Christian martyrs in fifteenth-century Italy. It was during this period that humanists were frequently tasked by wealthier patrons or the Church with rewriting and updating the biographies of saints and martyrs to conform with new rhetorical standards that were to be, like other genres of literature, based on ancient Latin models. Because martyrs were considered to be the very foundation of the early Church, there was a renewed demand for updated versions of their lives. An evolving understanding of historicity and of what it consisted contributed to the types of changes a humanist undertaking a hagiographic project might make to a particular martyrological narrative. There was a deep concern, for example, with separating events that could be substantiated as having truly occurred from those that seemed fantastical or outside the bounds of reality.[23] The involvement of Quattrocento humanists in reformulating the genre of hagiographic texts, and their interest in presenting only what could have or did in actuality happen in revised versions of these texts, demonstrates the larger preoccupation of the humanists, who sought to distinguish between *fabula* and *historia*, or legendary tales and proven events, in the texts and

[23] Alison Knowles Frazier, *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 68.

narratives, whether mythologically or religiously based, that they had inherited from the ancient and medieval eras.[24]

In some cases, those who undertook these commissions for revised lives of early martyrs expressed concern that holding these types of figures up as exemplary models was at best impractical, setting people up for failure, and at worst, dangerous or foolhardy. In the preface of his Latin account of the martyrdom of Mamas, the Sicilian humanist Giovanni Aurispa explicitly warns his readers against literally following the example of martyrs who suffered brutal deaths in the contexts of their own lives.[25] Those who shared Aurispa's point of view believed, like the Sicilian humanist, that the circumstances that had led to the martyrdoms of venerated saints were no longer the circumstances on the ground in Quattrocento Florence. Much had changed since the early years of the Christian church. Because Christianity was now the dominant religion throughout Europe, people no longer needed to fear for their lives in the context of daily worship, or sacrifice them willingly in order to maintain devotion to the precepts of their faith. Self-preservation was, after all, an important tenet of Christianity.

There were some, like Tommaso d'Arezzo, who vehemently disagreed with this sentiment. In his *Tractatus*, which he penned in the hopes that it would incite his readers to go on their own campaign of martyrdom, he explained that the Ottoman threat and the periodic battles with the Ottoman empire in the east actually presented an ideal opportunity—for those who felt so compelled—to make the ultimate sacrifice by giving up their lives in the quest to stamp out

---

[24] Peter G. Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought from Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 146; See also Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 67-71; Alberti, for instance, endeavored to rewrite the lives of early martyrs at the behest of the Venetian chancellor, Biagio Molin, whom he served as secretary, in 1433-34. Beginning with Potitus, Alberti found that the late antique and ninth-century sources available to him were inadequate for his task of providing a revised biography based on corroborated events and deeds that could be deemed historically accurate. This dearth, Frazier argues, resulted in a version that paid little attention to espousing the merits and virtues of saintly deaths, as was expected, and focused instead on Aristotelian precepts of virtues. Ultimately unable or unwilling to give the patron what he desired, the commission was given to another to finish.
[25] Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 58.

Islam.[26] These circumstances mostly pertained to those living or traveling to foreign lands, and so the examples provided by the heroic deaths of martyred saints, as he and others argued, were ideal for warriors and others who made their living battling the enemies of the faith, but also for those who led less exciting lives.[27] After spending a few years in Constantinople with the hopes of improving his Greek and then becoming preoccupied with writing his manual on the utility of heroic death through martyrdom, Tommaso did himself die a martyr's death of the kind he promoted in his *Tractatus*. It was not until Sultan Mehmed II daringly broached Italian shores in 1480, capturing Otranto, that the possibility and reality of martyrdom were once again thrust so completely into the contemporary consciousness. Eight hundred people were slaughtered for refusing to convert to Islam, and each remained unburied for an entire year and was, from the moment of death, hailed as a martyr.[28]

The various positions taken by humanists in the rewriting of saints' lives, then, cast into relief the growing importance of Aristotelian, rather than Augustinian, understandings of virtue, which informed the degree to which a great figure from the past was worthy to be emulated. Florentines were especially interested in those types of virtuous heroes that could provide a model for the ideal integration of the active and the contemplative lives to serve the civic sphere, which the humanistic model of education was meant to address. Appropriate models for cultivating this type of virtue, rooted securely in the cardinal virtues and meant to serve the civic good rather than the kingdom of God, had long been acknowledged, even by Augustine, as best represented by the pagan heroes.

1.6 Mythological Heroes as Singular

Mythological heroes like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus differed in several distinctive

[26] Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 81-90.
[27] Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 9-64; 81-99.
[28] Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 91-95.

ways from the poets, statesmen, biblical leaders, and warriors who often stood alongside them in world chronicles, biographies, and frescos featuring illustrious men. First, these particular heroes were each reputed to be the offspring of both a deity and a human, and thus occupied their own elite category of heroes who were known as demi-gods. Aeneas' mother was Venus, the goddess of love, Hercules' father was Jupiter, king of the gods, and Orpheus' father was the golden sun god Apollo, whose dominion of influence also included medicine, poetry, and music.

Additionally, the heroic status of demi-god was accorded to them because they frequently accomplished super-human actions requiring great strength and stamina, whether mental or physical, which helped them to overcome obstacles that were generally caused by disgruntled members of the classical pantheon. Deities sympathetic to their plights frequently aided these types of heroes in their journeys or quests. In the ancient narratives, sometimes these quests benefited the public, but just as often, they were individually motivated. Aeneas was called upon to lead the Trojans to the Italian peninsula where he was responsible for founding the city of Rome. The fall of Troy, which necessitated Aeneas' leadership of the Trojans, was the result of Juno's anger at having been spurned by Paris, who bestowed the gift of the golden apple on her rival, Venus, in acknowledgment of her status as most beautiful of the goddesses. Hercules was likewise a victim of Juno's wrath, fueled this time by the actions of her philandering husband Jupiter, whose affair with Alcmene proved to be the last straw for the goddess who presided over marriage. Orpheus, on the other hand, was prevented from bringing his beloved wife Eurydice back from the underworld by losing an impossible deal he struck with Persephone, wife of Pluto, and, according to some accounts, was subsequently torn limb-from-limb by maenads who found his abstention from sexual pursuits in memory of his lost wife both distasteful and insulting. Other accounts attributed his lack of interest in the opposite sex to a preference for men.

Another characteristic they held in common was their ability to travel between the mortal and immortal worlds. Each of the three heroes was able to visit the underworld, only to emerge whole again when the journey into another realm was completed. Aeneas ventured into the underworld after an encounter with a sibyl, who served as guide and explained what it was that he was witnessing as he encountered famous leaders that had paved the way for his own accomplishments. Hercules retrieved the three-headed guard dog of the gates of Hades, Cerberus, in order to satisfy one of Juno's tasks. Finally, Orpheus' journey into the underworld was necessitated by the untimely death of his wife Eurydice on their wedding day.

Finally, demi-gods were eventually apotheosized, which permitted them to eschew their mortal side and enjoy everlasting immortality and fame. Aeneas was brought into the realm of immortality after a successful marriage and prodigious lineage that included seeing his son become the king of Latium; Hercules endured a torturous death upon donning a cloak doused with venom of the hydra he had slain, at which time the gods took mercy on him and installed him in their pantheon; Orpheus was dismembered by angry maenads, a fate so cruel that Apollo showed him mercy and ensured his immortality as a prophet.

These examples indicate that a mythological hero's earthly existence was merely a phase to be endured before the transition from human to god could be accomplished. Essentially, they were required to fulfill their purposes valiantly while in the earthly realm in order to, at the end of their lives, join the realm of immortality where they could exist without end as a reward for their earthly efforts. In this way, meditating upon mythological heroes would have aligned with the deepest desires of the humanists, whose own passionate pursuit of a fame that would surely outlast death was often complicated when attempts were made to reconcile this pursuit within a Christian framework. Petrarch addresses this in his *Triumphs*, when he makes the sun opine,

"For if a man who had been famed in life / continues in his fame in spite of death, / what will become of the law that heaven made?"[29] Petrarch's bitterness at the envious nature of Time, who displaces the triumph of Fame far too soon, bubbles to the surface in his poetic description. In the Tuscan poet's formulation, Time consigns all who aspired to an enduring fame to "fade away in smoke."[30] His own heartfelt desire is to believe "that for long ages Fame may still endure [after death]," and vehemently contends that "Happy are they who die in swaddling clothes / And wretched they who die in utmost age. / 'Blessed is he who is not born,' 'tis said."[31] In the end, Petrarch is unable to defend his own hard-won reputation against fleet-footed Time, who "in his avarice steals so much away: / Men call it Fame; 'tis but a second death, / And both alike are strong beyond defense / Thus doth Time triumph over the world and Fame."[32]

1.7 Earlier Visual and Literary Traditions

A number of interrelated visual traditions with medieval origins contributed to the increased interest in mythological heroes as artistic subjects in fifteenth-century Florence: frescoes of famous men within domestic interiors and illustrated world chronicles from the thirteenth century, and painted illustrations and *cassone* panels featuring Petrarch's *Triumphs* beginning in the late fourteenth.[33]

This interest in studying the portraits of illustrious men can also be detected in the Renaissance practice of collecting ancient coins, gems, cameos, and sculptures. The major difference between the contemporary murals and illustrations and the ancient artifacts was of course that the contemporary works amassed the illustrious individuals within one composition

[29] Francesco Petrarca and Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *The Triumphs of Petrarch* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962) 95.
[30] Petrarca and Wilkins, *The Triumphs of Petrarch,* 100.
[31] Petrarca and Wilkins, *The Triumphs of Petrarch,* 100.
[32] Petrarca and Wilkins, *The Triumphs of Petrarch,* 100.

or series, which provided the opportunity for viewers to view them all at once, side-by-side, while the ancient objects could be viewed in isolation or endlessly reconfigured as new pieces were added. The first category, frescoes and illustrated chronicles encouraged viewers to consider the merits of the featured heroes in an exercise of comparison and contrast, while the second encouraged both solo and side-by-side viewing, with the collector able to organize the coins into whichever arrangement suited them at that particular moment.

Beyond frescoes featuring famous men and women that could be emulated by the Renaissance viewer, there was, as Anne Dunlop has discussed at some length, a trend of decorating palazzo walls with stories of a secular nature.[34] That it was a much-observed trend can be gleaned from the words emblazoned in Duke Federigo da Montefeltro's library. They provide a commentary on the importance of studying edifying literature by juxtaposing the functions and effects of visual and material splendor with the books that populated the duke's library. The inscription advises, "Let there be gilded pillars of snow white marble, and let the chambers painted with varied figures be enjoyed. Let also the walls be hung with tales of Troy, and let the gardens be fragrant in marvelous beauty, so that both inside and outside the house shines with embroidered luxury."[35] Though her study focuses on palaces outside the city of Florence, their significant numbers indicate that it is likely such trends were also prevalent in the city of Florence during the same period.

It is unfortunate that no such decorative cycles have survived in the city, but Florentine humanists were sometimes tasked with advising artists and patrons on the ways heroes might have looked. For example, Salutati responded to one such request when a Florentine artist was

---

[34] Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); see especially her first chapter, "'Una Chasa Grande, Dipinta': Palazzo Datini in Prato" in which she addresses the process of choosing subjects for palace interiors.

[35] Quoted in Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 35.

painting a fresco that documented the stories of Troy in another city, and found that he was stumped as to the appearance of Hector.[36] How might Salutati have built his reputation for having the expertise necessary to describe how heroic figures from the past looked? From Poliziano, we have a letter addressed to Lorenzo in which the humanist recounts the variety of information he himself considered when writing, stating that he was indebted to "the ancient codices, the evidence of coins, and the antiquities carved in bronze or marble" that the wealthy patron allowed him to borrow.[37]

This interest in an accurate depiction of a heroic figure aligned with the trend of having accurate portraits of people frescoed in cycles of *uomini famosi*, even if a substantial portion of these portraits were derived from stylized ancient coins that appeared in every serious collector's study. In fact, ancient coin collections were particularly useful for rounding out notions regarding what important individuals of the ancient world looked like, paired as they were with both portrait and name. As Fusco and Corti point out in their important study of Lorenzo de' Medici's collections, students of history deftly cross-referenced information gleaned through their readings of ancient texts with eagerly acquired coins in order to enhance their knowledge of the period.[38]

Petrarch's letter describing his visit with Emperor Charles IV, for which he had been summoned to Milan in December of 1354, includes an important example of how the poet conceived of the moral worth of ancient exemplars. When asked to share with the emperor his as yet unfinished volume of the *Lives of Famous Men*, Petrarch promises that he will do so, provided that the emperor will, in the intervening period of time it will take the poet to complete

[36] Dunlop, *Painted Palaces*, 165.
[37] Laurie S. Fusco and Gino Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici, Collector and Antiquarian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 109.
[38] Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici, Collector and Antiquarian,*108.

the biographies, manage to make himself "worthy of this gift, and of a book bearing such a title."[39] This the emperor might accomplish by first traveling to Rome to receive the imperial crown and title, and then through his deeds. For Petrarch, these "deeds" would certainly include maintaining a presence in Italy after being crowned Holy Roman Emperor, in order to restore Italy to unity.[40] Not content to leave Charles IV with just historical facts about the men whose lives he should strive to measure up to, Petrarch drives his point home by entrusting him with his own collection of gold and silver coins featuring portraits of the Roman rulers. In his letter to Laelius, he describes the moment in vivid detail: "'Behold, Caesar, those whose successor you are,' I exclaimed, 'those whom you should admire and emulate, and with whose image you may well compare your own. To no one but you would I have given these coins, but your rank and authority induces me to part with them. I know the name, the character, and the history, of each of those who are there depicted, but you have not merely to know their history, you must follow in their footsteps;—the coins should, therefore, belong to you.' Thereupon I gave him the briefest outline of the great events in the life of each of the persons represented, adding such words as might stimulate his courage and his desire to imitate their conduct."[41]

The documented desire to have a relatively accurate notion of what an individual may have looked like would have served to facilitate the "ars memorativa" more effectively, so that individuals could truly have before the mind's eye a detailed memory of important exemplars of virtue. It also serves to illuminate the quasi-historical nature of most figures from the past, whose stories were handed down from generation to generation of writer, mythographer, and historian,

[39] Francesco Petrarca, James H. Robinson, and Henry W. Rolfe, *Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters: A Selection from His Correspondence with Boccaccio and Other Friends, Designed to Illustrate the Beginnings of the Renaissance* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 370-371.
[40] Benjamin G, Kohl, Ronald G. Witt, and Elizabeth B. Welles. Eds., *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 28.
[41] Petrarca, Robinson, and Rolfe, *Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar,* 372.

as well as to the visual artist. Naturally the educated believed that certain feats of heroism were exaggerated as they had passed from mouth to ear, from pen to reader, but this did not in itself cause Florentines to believe that heroes like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus had not existed. Rather, demi-gods survived, at least in the Renaissance mind, in a euhemeristic tradition.

Petrarch, for instance, believed that Hercules was neither a god nor a single man. Instead, in his *De viris illustribus*, the poet agrees with ancient Roman writers like Varro, who believed that there were many men (more than forty, according to Varro) of old whose lives and histories had become inextricably intertwined over time and had finally culminated in the legendary Hercules known in the Renaissance. Petrarch thus judges his task in writing the biography of a figure like Hercules to be quite difficult—he likens the confusion caused by overlapping narratives to a labyrinth—because the task he endeavors to accomplish is not one of rehearsing mere legend, but rather, the difficult mission of separating fact from fiction, so as to present the reader with a "historical" narrative of the most famous Hercules' life.[42] The version of Hercules that finally then emerges from Petrarch's biography is part philosopher, part strongman. His supreme virtue, according to the poet, is that in his lifetime, he managed to successfully balance the demands of a spiritual life with necessary action to rid the world of beasts and enemies who wished to harm people. In a sense, Hercules is lauded for striking the correct balance between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, an accomplishment that Petrarch both respected and envied.

Salutati's view of Hercules was much the same as his good friend Petrarch's, and his own

[42] "Quanto a ercole, come è facile narrare le leggende, cosi è assai difficile tesserne la storia. Sappiamo infatti che non pochi sono stati gli Ercoli, o piuttosto gli uomini erculei, senza dire di tutti quei forti chiamati erculei da Varrone; ed è questa la ragione per la quale su di lui si sono scritte cose cosi diverse e incerte che il lettore, come preso nei meandri di un labirinto, non riesce a trovare la via d'uscita. Orbene: per quanto potrà il filo d'Arianna del mio ingegno, avviandomi lungo gli oscuri sentieri di un'antichità quanto mai remota ed evitando l'intrico dei piu diversi sviamenti, con l'appoggio di chi ha saputo indicare, anche se poche, strade piu sicure, cercherò di giungere vicino alla verità il piu possibile che m'è concesso." in Francesco Petrarca and Ugo Dotti, *Gli Uomini Illustri; Vita Di Giulio Cesare,* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 2007), 83, XI.1.

discussion of the origins of the hero draws heavily upon Varro as well as Seneca's characterization of Hercules in his two most famous plays: *Hercules Furens* and *Hercules Oetaeus*. In the Florentine chancellor's *De laboribus ercolis*, where he is attempting to validate his reasons for seeing Hercules as an allegory for the soul, the word Hercules itself becomes synonymous with *hero*.[43] According to Salutati's reasoning, the name Hercules is essentially an umbrella term that developed from the Greek, *heros kleos*, with *heros* signifying "hero" or "Hera" and *kleos* referring to the glory and immortality sought by great men through actions of great merit. Because so much time has elapsed from the time these worthy heroes accomplished their deeds, the humanist refuses to waste any time unraveling who was who in the amalgam, and resigns himself to speaking of Hercules as though he had been just one figure. Salutati offers an explanation of the various origins of Hercules' name, to clarify for his reader just why so many men would have found themselves absorbed into the Herculean persona. Hercules, according to the possible etymological roots of his name and Salutati's decipherments, can actually be defined as "hero." If the name Hercules is translated to "glory of the earth," "glory of quarrels," "glory of heroes" or "glory of Juno" as Witt tells us,[44] then for Salutati Hercules is the consummate hero, after whom many men of worth are known as Hercules.[45]

From Pliny's chapter on painting in his *Natural History*, we learn that the artist Parrhasius was particularly renowned for painting images of heroic figures and demi-gods. He tells of a revered picture by his hand that featured Hercules, together with Meleager and Perseus and notes that the triumphant Greeks, Achilles, Agamemnon, and Ulysses, comprised another. He further goes on to tell us that his "Aeneas, Castor, and Pollux, all in the same picture, are

[43] Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983), 215.
[44] Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads,* 215.
[45] Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, 214.

highly praised."[46] That these types of images existed in the ancient world would have been well known to Renaissance artists and viewers, which likely spurred patrons to commission these types of frescoes with a secular theme.

1.8 Parallel Traditions in Literature

Each of these visual traditions can be considered to have had a contemporary textual tradition that paralleled, supplemented, and often enhanced the experience of the viewers as they engaged with images of the figures. In the early Renaissance, a renewed interest in the literary tradition of famous men spurred the creation of cycles of commemorative portraiture in public spaces.[47] These literary traditions included variations on the lives of illustrious men, whose biographies were penned first by ancient writers like Pliny, Livy, Plutarch, Suetonius, among others, and then were used as models by humanists including Petrarch, Boccaccio, Giannozzo Manetti, and many others.[48] Catherine Neil Parke identifies two major categories into which Renaissance biographies written by humanists can be placed: those that concentrate on a single individual and those that present numerous illustrious men or women as a collective examination of various lives.[49]

To this list, I would add a third type of biographical text, which is represented by the Greek philosopher Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. In this type of account, the lives of famous men are discussed with a special emphasis on the individual's moral virtues and failings. Plutarch pairs each of his lives, usually one Greek and one Roman, so that readers are prompted to compare the merits and shortcomings of one with the other, and then can see the philosopher's own views

---

[46]Pliny and H. Rackham, *Natural History*, Vol. 9, 35.36 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1938), 314-315.
[47] Joost-Gaugier, "Poggio and Visual Tradition," 74.
[48]Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, "Giotto's Hero Cycle in Naples: A Prototype of Donne Illustri and a Possible Literary Connection," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte,* 43.3 (1980): 313. Joost-Gaugier mentions Livy, Pliny, and Suetonius as Petrarch's models for his own lives of illustrious men.
[49] Catherine Neal Parke, *Biography: Writing Lives* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 10.

regarding how they compare with one another in an essay that follows each pairing. For instance, Theseus and Romulus are two figures that receive this treatment. In the essay that follows their respective biographies (except in a few cases, where none is extant), Plutarch discusses factors such as their leadership capabilities, perceived failings, their shared tendency to take women by force as was the case in the comparison of Theseus and Romulus, among other things, and the perceived motivations for each.[50] Following Plutarch's lead but with certain modifications, Boccaccio's *Fates of Illustrious Men* (*De casibus virorum illustrium*) brings together famous leaders from history and mythology, often appending a moralizing tract that details the vices perceived in each and how they might have been avoided, had they felt so inclined.[51]

Another biographical genre popular during the Renaissance focused on the lives of saints and recounted their martyrdoms. Although these had a long history of being written in the vernacular, hagiographic accounts were revived as a humanist genre by learned members of the papal curia, including Leon Battista Alberti, who were often tasked with revising old accounts of saints' lives.[52] A textual tradition that supported the dissemination of visual catalogues of heroes was that of the world chronicle, exemplified by manuscripts such as the so-called *Crespi Chronicle*, now in the Crespi collection of the Museo Diocesano of Milan, though in this case, the images contained within were copied directly from a fresco of *uomini famosi* commissioned for his palace by Cardinal Orsini in Rome. The *Florentine Picture Chronicle* of the mid-fifteenth century was based upon a tradition that juxtaposed textual information about each figure with images, though in the case of the Florentine work the textual is entirely absent, except where labels are included to clarify the individuals and cities represented.

---

[50] Plutarch, *Lives, Volume I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola,* Trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library 46 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914). See for instance, "Theseus and Romulus," 1-6.
[51] Giovanni Boccaccio and Louis Brewer Hall, *The Fates of Illustrious Men* (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1965).
[52] Frazier, *Possible Lives*, 13-43.

Finally, the iconography of fame and its heroes most certainly experienced a resurgence beginning in the late fourteenth century due to Petrarch's *Triumphs*, a work of poetry that describes a dream that consists of a procession of triumphal marches led by personifications of Chastity, Love, Fame, Time, Death, and Eternal Glory. By the fifteenth century, artists had developed a stable iconography of the triumphs, based both upon descriptive information provided by Petrarch and also from Boccaccio's poem, *Amorosa Visione*, in which four triumphs, including one of Glory (as the precursor of Petrarch's Fame), appear to the poet in a dream.

1.9 Frescoes of Famous Men: Civic Contexts

Frescoes of famous men were used to decorate civic spaces in Florence as early as the fourteenth century. A large-scale cycle of famous men was commissioned for the Palazzo della Signoria, the seat of the Florentine government in 1385.[53] Though no longer extant, as is the case for many of the city's fourteenth-century frescoes, this cycle was painted on the walls of the saletta known as the *aula minor*, on the second floor of the government palace. It represents a shift from the mostly religious subject matter that had previously served as decoration in the signorial palace to a notably secular theme.[54] A fifteenth-century manuscript of twenty-two epigrams penned by Coluccio Salutati to accompany each figure in the cycle can be found in Florentine collections.[55] Commissions for paintings featuring illustrious individuals, like

[53] Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532: Government, Architecture, and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 52; Maria M. Donato, "Hercules and David in the Early Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio: Manuscript Evidence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1991): 86; Maria M. Donato, "Gli eroi romani tra storia ed "exemplum": I primi cicli umanistici di uomini famosi." *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte Italiana*: vol. 2, ed. Salvatore Settis (Torino: Einaudi, 1985): 126-130; Beatrice P. Strozzi and Marc Bormand, eds., *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60* (Firenze: Mandragora, 2013), 392.
[54] Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532,* 52.
[55] Nicolai Rubinstein, "Classical Themes in the Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 29–30. For the epigrams in full and the manuscripts from which they come, see Teresa A. Hankey, "Salutati's Epigrams for the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence," *Journal of the Warburg*

Hercules, have long been associated with tyrants and monarchs in modern scholarship,[56] but it is important to recognize that city-states such as Florence, whose citizens valued their form of government as being directly related to the Roman republic and the only form capable of assuring liberty for its inhabitants, also valued and identified with illustrious individuals, though the choice of figures in such depictions was likely somewhat different, and in Florence a preference was shown for heroic figures that resonated with the ideals of republicanism.

Rubinstein, like Donato, argues that the figures chosen by Salutati for representation in the Palazzo della Signoria were inspired by Petrarch, whose *De viris illustribus* was in the chancellor's library by 1381.[57] Included in the fresco cycle were ancient Roman statesmen and generals associated with republican ideals of liberty, four emperors, and in a deviation that indicates Filippo Villani's biographies of famous Florentines was the second source employed in devising the program for the mural, five Florentine poets. Sometime later, and not part of the initial program of famous men to which the epigrams point, a large painted figure of Hercules with its own *titulus* was unveiled in the signorial palace.[58] The *titulus* was noted in a fifteenth-century century *zibaldone* in the Biblioteca Riccardiana of Florence, and attributed to Roberto de' Rossi by its author.[59] Though it is not clear precisely where Hercules would have been placed, especially because he was the only mythological figure to be included in the Palazzo Vecchio cycle, there is no doubt that the Signoria felt his inclusion in the program was fitting because he was a symbol of the republic.

---

and Courtauld Institutes. (1959): 363-365; see especially footnotes 1-2.

[56] Donato, "Hercules and David," 88, see footnote 26; For Joost-Gaugier's examination of Petrarch's relationship to Robert of Anjou in Naples, and her evaluation of the Florentine humanists' debate over Petrarch's proclivity for serving "tyrants," see her article, "Giotto's Hero Cycle in Naples," 311-318.

[57] Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532,* 52-53; Donato, "Gli eroi romani tra storia ed 'exemplum,' 126-148.

[58] Donato, "Hercules and David," 85, 89-90. She argues that this image was most likely a painting and not a sculpture for two important reasons—first, if it had been a sculpture, some trace of it should still exist and second, because that would mean it would have been one of the first large-scale, nude, in-the-round representation of a secular subject, which she believes is highly unlikely before 1415.

[59] Donato, "Hercules and David," 83-84; Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532,* 54-56.

Another civic institution in Florence followed suit shortly after the turn of the fifteenth century. The Arte dei Giudici e Notai, or Guild of Lawyers and Notaries, commissioned a cycle of famous men for the entrance hall of their meeting house on Via Proconsolo.[60] When members filed into the building, they were greeted with the portraits of the most famous of their own ranks. According to Goro Dati, it was "a powerful guild and can be said to be Christendom's center for the notary profession. The great masters, teachers, and authors who have written on this subject have all been from Florence."[61] Some of the individuals included in this cycle had also been depicted in the Palazzo della Signoria painting, and included humanists and poets whose membership in the guild had increased its renown.[62] Among the men featured were Petrarch, Dante, Zenobius Strada, Boccaccio, Salutati, and Claudianus, all of whom were also present in the Palazzo Vecchio program.[63] (Fig. 1.2) In 1406, the artist Ambrogio di Baldese was paid for his contribution to the fresco of the latter two figures, though from the available evidence, it is unclear whether he was also responsible for the four portraits of Florentine poets.[64] Absent in this case, unlike in the signorial palace, were any figures from mythological contexts.

From these frescoes, it is possible to discern that Florentine attitudes toward individuals famed for their virtue was deeply rooted in an appreciation for the past. But though the past was an important element in constructing cycles of illustrious individuals, these programs were also considered to be a reflection of a sense of historical continuity, with origins in a distant time period, but that continued through to the present day. This continuous lineage thus alluded to

---

[60] Strozzi and Bormand, eds., *The Springtime of the Renaissance,* 392; See also Werner Cohn, "Franco Sacchetti und das ikonographische Programm der Gewölbemalereien von Orsanmichele," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* (1958): 74-75.
[61] Gregorio Dati, *Istoria di Firenze di Goro Dati dall' Anno Mccclxxx all' Anno Mccccv: Con Annotazioni* (Firenze: nella Stamperia di G. Manni, 1735), 9. 133.
[62] Nicolai Rubinstein, "Classical Themes," 30, fn 13; Strozzi and Bormand, eds., *The Springtime of the Renaissance,* 392.
[63] Cohn, "Franco Sacchetti," 74-75.
[64] Cohn, "Franco Sacchetti," 75.

future glory, when the heroes of Florence would take their place amongst the luminaries of old. The flurry of biographical sketches of important Florentines mirrored a desire to include individuals from the recent past, whose accomplishments ranged from successfully executing their civic duties to writing eloquent prose or poetry that rivaled those of their ancient forebears, commemorated in frescoes. For example, not only was Salutati honored after his death by having his portrait appended to the cycle in the Palazzo Vecchio for which he had written the epigrams, but the later Chancellor of the republic, Poggio Bracciolini, was considered in his time to have been the equal of past great Florentines, joining the ranks of Salutati, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante before him, and therefore deserving of his own place in the palace's fresco. His sons asked the governing body in 1461 to honor their father in this manner, a request that was granted two years after his death in 1459.[65] Poggio's contribution to Florence was deemed significant enough to warrant making another addition to the fresco, and in so doing, he too, became represented within the group of illustrious individuals that held a great degree of importance for the republic. Vespasiano da Bisticci characterized him as a man whose contribution to the city of Florence had been significant, if not always appreciated in the way that it deserved. According to Vespasiano, one of Poggio's most important contributions to the city was the history he wrote of Florence.[66] After being elected to the chancellorship, Poggio left his comfortable abode in Rome, where he had enjoyed a close relationship with the Pope, for Florence.

For Poggio, who had contributed significantly to the discourse of virtue and its role in acquiring nobility with his treatise, *On Nobility*, this kind of commemoration would have been especially welcomed had he been alive to see it. He argues for the importance of having the portraits of illustrious individuals of noble character before the eyes, for contemplation and

[65] Rubinstein,"Classical Themes," 32; Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532,* 52.
[66] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates: The Vespasiano Memoirs, Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century,* Trans. William George and Emily Waters (New York, Harper & Row, 1963), 354.

emulation, so that one might heighten his or her own character and thus, nobility.[67] He himself kept busts of worthy men of the ancient past in his study, which provided for him a way to meditate on the character of these individuals so that he might better be able to cultivate his own virtue. Poggio's portrait, featured in such a prominent place as the Palazzo della Signoria, would likewise have been intended to function as an exemplar for others—a call to virtuous action, particularly as it related to the governance of the republic.

The ever-changing, dynamic nature of fame is illustrated again in the fresco of the palazzo on via Proconsolo, for which the guild of justices and notaries approved the later addition of a portrait of Leonardo Bruni in the cycle. In 1455, Andrea Castagno was commissioned to paint Bruni alongside the humanists and poets who already populated the walls. Coinciding with the addition of Poggio Bracciolini to the Palazzo Vecchio cycle after his death in 1459, one of the Pollaiuolo brothers expanded the original program of the Proconsolo fresco to include portraits of Poggio and also the humanist Giannozzo Manetti.[68] That evidence points to not one, but multiple, periods of expansion in the iconography of this fresco of famous men supports the notion that Florentines had moved beyond the mere genealogical impetus of previous world chronicles and into a new mindset that consisted of shaping future histories in their present lives. The knowledge that it was possible for one to be commemorated so soon after death in such a public manner made this mode of lasting fame a tangible reality, one that could be actively sought in life, if not fully realized until after death.

1.10 Frescoes of Famous Men: Domestic Contexts

Around 1420, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici elected to have the walls of one of his grand

[67] Poggio Bracciolini, "On True Nobility," *Knowledge, Goodness, and Power: The Debate Over Nobility Among Quattrocento Italian Humanists*, Ed. Trans. Albert Rabil (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991, 64-65.
[68] Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 116-117.

halls decorated with a cycle of famous men. His was one of the earliest frescoes of *uomini illustri* within a domestic space known to have been executed in Florence. The artist to whom the commission was granted was Bicci di Lorenzo. Giorgio Vasari's account of the artist's life indicates that this work could still be admired in Vasari's own time, but it was destroyed long before the present day. That he was entrusted with such an important commission by the patriarch of the Medici family, whose banking ventures had steadily increased the fame of the family name over his lifetime, indicates that Bicci di Lorenzo's level of skill belied his youthful age. Vasari tells us that "Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, seeing his good manner, caused him to paint in the hall of the old house of the Medici which afterwards came into the possession of Lorenzo, brother of Cosimo the Elder, when the great palace was built all those famous men that are still seen there to-day, very well preserved."[69] According to his sixteenth-century biographer, Bicci di Lorenzo did more work in this vein, when he painted the famous leaders of the Franciscan Order for the Convent of Santa Croce in 1418.[70]

It is not known which figures the patriarch of the Medici family selected to be featured so prominently on the walls of the palazzo, though some guesses can be made, based upon such frescoes in similarly domestic contexts, though these were created at a somewhat later date. In the early years of the 1430's, Cardinal Orsini of Rome devoted a large room in his palazzo on Monte Giordano in Rome to the display of famous figures from world history. The Cardinal's commission for the *sala theatri* was the most extensive and monumental-scale visual compilation of famous figures of its time. It functioned as a visual evocation of a historical timeline that was, at the time, divided into six ages, beginning with Adam and Eve and ending in the contemporary era, which began with the birth of Christ. Though no longer extant, there are a number of

[69] Vasari's *Lives* Online, "Life of Lorenzo di Bicci," http://members.efn.org/~acd/vite/VasariLorenzoBicci.html
[70] Vasari's *Lives* Online, "Life of Lorenzo di Bicci," http://members.efn.org/~acd/vite/VasariLorenzoBicci.html

manuscripts that preserve information, both in images and in the accompanying *tituli*, of the figures and inscriptions that were included.[71] The so-called *Crespi Chronicle*, for instance, indicates that the fresco featured 306 famous individuals that represented the passage of time and another 81 enumerated on tables as *tituli*.[72] This organizational scheme was based on Augustine's understanding of historical time as set out in his fifth-century treatise, *On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed.*[73] From various manuscripts, we learn that Hercules, Aeneas and Orpheus were all included in the fresco as having lived in the third age of man.[74] Just as he had documented Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's commission, Vasari includes a brief mention of Cardinal Orsini's fresco in his life of Giottino in the second edition of his *Lives*, though scholars now believe it was Paolo Uccello, together with another Florentine artist, Masolino, whom Vasari also credits for this project, [75] who created the fresco for the Roman prelate's indoor theatre. Known as an avid book collector and humanist scholar, Orsini created this space in his palazzo at Monte Giordano in order to host men famed for their learning even in their own age. For the Florentine luminaries including Leonardo Bruni, Poggio, and others who attended the Cardinal's functions, it would have been lauded as a magnificent backdrop for the learned debates, conversations, and feasts that it was designed to host.

An interesting point about the figures represented in the Cardinal's indoor theatre, as mentioned briefly above, was the fact that not all were actually meant to serve as positive

---

[71] Annelies Amberger, *Giordano Orsinis uomini famosi in Rom: Helden der Weltgeschichte im Frühhumanismus* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2003), 43-78. See also appendix D, in which Amberger compiles and gives detailed information from each of the manuscripts that survive.

[72] Amberger, *Giordano Orsinis uomini famosi*, 79.

[73] Augustine and S. D. F. Salmond, "On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed," *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 3, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887), 22.39-22.40, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf103.iv.iii.xxiii.html (retrieved January 17, 2016).

[74] For a transcription of two manuscripts that describe the individuals included in the fresco, see W. A. Simpson, "Cardinal Giordano Orsini as a Prince of the Church and a Patron of the Arts. A Contemporary Panegyric and Two Descriptions of the Lost Frescoes in Monte Giordano," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 29 (1966): 150-159.

[75] W. A. Simpson, "Cardinal Giordano Orsini," 137.

exemplars.[76] There were many individuals, such as Sardanapalus, who were more infamous than famous. In this way, the fresco could have functioned as a visual parallel to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, in which he presents both strengths and flaws for famous individuals with the intention of providing an opportunity for the reader to compare the virtues and vices of each.

Two decades later, in 1451, Andrea del Castagno was given the commission for another extensive cycle of famous men, this time for a villa just outside of Florence at Legnaia. (Fig. 1.3) The fresco survives today and is now part of the Uffizi collections. The Florentine patron has most recently been identified as Filippo di Giovanni Carducci.[77] Standing at about 8 feet tall, the sense of monumentality is further enhanced by their elevation upon the wall and the three-dimensionality with which Castagno painted them. Thus, they appear to loom, threatening to step from their painted niche directly onto one's head. The effect is quite close to the experience Florentines may have had as they hurried by the larger-than-life size sculptures on the façade of Orsanmichele. In fact, just as Donatello's *St. George* and two of Nanni di Banco's *Four Crowned Saints*, whose toes break the fourth wall into the viewer's space, so, too, do Castagno's figures seem restless within their circumscribed spaces.

This sense of dynamism has been attributed to the artist's vision of creating a parallel between the sculpted series of famous men that were known to have been commissioned for Emperor Augustus, as recounted in Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*. Scholars have also noted the similarity of these figures to those prescribed by Leon Battista Alberti in his discussion of appropriate decorative motifs for dining halls and porticoes in his treatise on architecture.[78] Just as in Orsini's palace, both men and women are depicted in this series. Representing important

[76] Robert L. Mode, "The Orsini Sala Theatri at Monte Giordano in Rome," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 26.2 (1973): 170-171.
[77] Strozzi and Bormand, eds., *The Springtime of the Renaissance,* 390.
[78] Strozzi and Bormand, eds., *The Springtime of the Renaissance*, 391.

moments in Florentine history are Filippo Scolari (more familiarly known as Pippo Spano), Farinata degli Uberti, and Niccolò Acciaiuoli, representing poetic accomplishments are Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, and representing famous women are Queen Tomyris, the Cumaean Sibyl, and Esther. It is unknown whether women were included in the earlier fresco of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, but it is certainly possible. Each of the figures in the fresco at Villa Carducci was accompanied by brief inscriptions, painted so as to appear inscribed in the marble base of the faux architectural frames.

1.11 Creating an Iconography of Fame

The growing importance of fame, particularly the striving for personal fame in one's lifetime and the hope that one's likeness might be preserved and commemorated in fresco cycles, was directly linked to the acquisition of virtue. Personal virtue could be cultivated, just as a vineyard or garden could be enhanced through the cultivation of plants from the best seeds.[79] Marsilio Ficino concludes his *Theologia platonica*, in which he expounds upon the cultivation of the human soul in its efforts to reunite with the Divine, by drawing an analogy between the growth of a virtuous soul and plants: "But humans from a tender age, like plants from their younger years, must be cared for and directed to the best fruit."[80] With careful pruning, then, a person could remove unbecoming behaviors and inclinations to allow the best parts of him or herself to flourish. By meditating upon models of virtue, like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus, one was better able to attend to the various facets of virtue, whether it be strength, perspicacity, patience, duty, or learned cultural activities, like playing musical instruments.

---

[79] For a comprehensive discussion of how vegetative imagery was employed in Renaissance ideas of virtue and vice, see especially Chapter Six, "Vegetative Language of Virtue and Vice in Discourses on the Dignity or Depravity of Humankind," in Maryanne C. Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998), 119-154.

[80] Marsilio Ficino, *The Philebus Commentary,* trans. Michael J. B. Allen, (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 172.

The humanistic discourse that characterized Florence in the fifteenth-century prompted artists to consider how fame, a virtue for all intents and purposes, could most effectively be rendered. Appending a new personification to the already comfortably established group of cardinal and theological virtues did not seem to be an option. With the continuing popularity of Petrarch's *Trionfi* into the fifteenth century, many patrons of fine manuscripts chose to have the poem illustrated by local artists like Apollonio di Giovanni. In these volumes quite appropriately, the figure of Fame was depicted on her triumphal chariot as none other than a modified personification of Fortitude, whose identifying attributes, a sword and armor, reflected the essential characteristics that those hungry for fame should strive to embody. While she grasps the sword of Fortitude in one hand, her other hand is often pictured holding a statue of Cupid or a sumptuous book. (Fig. 1.4) The statue of Cupid is ostensibly a strange attribute for the personification of fame, but it is likely that this marriage between fame and love comes not from Petrarch's triumph, as scholars have pointed out, but from Boccaccio's description of Glory in his *Amorosa Visione*, written in 1342.[81]

Fame represented the promise of reward for those whose heroic actions and virtue, whether accomplished through brawn or brain, merited everlasting praise. This kind of praise and heroic status would only come, according to this configuration, after the Triumph of Death. Petrarch characterizes fame as "Her who saves man from the tomb, and gives him life," and it seems that he is most invested in this particular triumph.[82] That in Petrarch's scheme the Triumph of Fame follows the Triumph of Death but precedes the Triumph of Time is telling. The poet's own quest for immortality, if not in life then in spirit, is well attested both by his writings and his own actions. Petrarch himself worked single-mindedly to revive the ancient and

[81] Introduction in Giovanni Boccaccio, Robert Hollander, Timothy Hampton, and Margherita Frankel, *Amorosa Visione,* Bilingual ed. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), xii.
[82] Petrarca and Wilkins, *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, 73.

venerable tradition of bestowing laurels upon poets of great talent. In his efforts to legitimize this form of renown, the poet insisted that Robert of Anjou, king of Naples, should bestow this title on him, but not without first testing his acumen and intelligence.[83] Petrarch was crowned poet laureate on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, and to drive home the importance of poets in the construction of the heroic ideal, he quotes directly from Virgil's *Aeneid*, when he addresses the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus in his own voice: "Fortunate both! If in the least my songs / Avail, no future day will ever take you / Out of the record of remembering Time, / While children of Aeneas make their home / Around the Capitol's unshaken rock, / And still the Roman Father governs all."[84] Petrarch's choice of quote was calculated, as one might expect for such a highly anticipated event. With these resonant words, Petrarch effectively linked both the moment and place of his laureation and the enduring fame he would receive not only to the Roman poet he so admired, but also to the hero of his heart, Aeneas.

One must understand this to be Petrarch's own admission that he is now one of the contemporary *uomini illustri* taking his place among the much-admired great wordsmiths of the ancient world, but also a way of figuring himself among an illustrious group of descendants that all hailed as their patriarch the hero who set out to fulfill the prophecy that would bring about the foundation of Rome. There is a sense that poets merge with other types of heroic leaders in this gambit. As in the world chronicles and the frescoes of famous men, where different types and ranks of heroes stood alongside one another—emperor next to general next to mythological hero—so, too, is Petrarch, by having quoted these verses, justifying the composition of the heroic ideal as consisting of various kinds of deeds. Interestingly, it should be pointed out that Petrarch

[83] Kathleen Christian, *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, C. 1350-1527*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 38-40.
[84] Virgil and Robert Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid* (New York: Random House, 1983), 9.633-9.638; Carlo Godi, "La 'Collatio Laureationis' del Petrarca," *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 13 (1970): 21.

himself chose to omit famous poets from his biographies of illustrious men, choosing instead to focus on generals and statesmen.

In many cases, the chariot was accompanied by famous men, which usually included Virgil himself. In one illustration by Apollonio, for instance, a red-robed Virgil is positioned at the top right of Fame's phalanx of luminaries, where he stands next to Samson. (Fig. 1.5) So that the reader could immediately identify the ancient poet, the artist included his name next to his head. On the other side of Fame one finds Hercules holding his knotty club, and Aristotle, mirroring Virgil's positioning on the other side. Interestingly enough, Aeneas and Orpheus are rarely included in such depictions; at least this is the case in the illuminated manuscripts of Florence, though Hercules is frequently depicted in this retinue. This is perhaps due to the fact that Petrarch himself does not provide Aeneas' name in verse, but refers to him rather as one of "two famous Trojans." In at least one documented instance, though not in Florence, Aeneas joined the likes of other "famous princes of the Gentiles." A room of Azzone Visconti's palace was decorated with an image of Fame or "Worldly Glory" surrounded by Aeneas, Attila, Hector, Hercules, among others. Apparently, these figures were in the company of the patron himself, with Azzone's presence and likeness noted by the chronicler, who marveled at the "gold and azure and bright colors with such beauty and such subtle art that their like could not be found anywhere else in the world."[85] That Azzone would be included in this type of fresco contrasts with Florentine practice, which only appended contemporary individuals to these arrays after their death.

An unknown Florentine poet at the court of King Robert of Naples created short sonnets to accompany the illustrious heroes frescoed there by Giotto in 1330. The poem for Aeneas

[85] *Gualvanei de la Flamma OP, Opusculum de rebus gestis ab Azone, Luchinno et Iohanne vicecomitibus: Ab anno MCCCXXVIII usque ad annum MCCCXLII*, edited by Carlo Castiglioni in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 12, pt. 4 (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1938), 17; Dunlop, *Painted Palaces,* 274; see footnote 14 for translation.

reads:

> I stand here to frame and figure Aeneas,
> That great and famous leader of Troy,
> Who covered so much of the ocean's surface
> Before disembarking at Dido's shore.
> Whose heart, when her eyes fell upon me,
> Ignited, in vain, with pleasure in me.
> And later she died at her own hand,
> When I took my leave: and the fault is only mine.
> I then went to Italy, by divine command,
> After first seeing Hades and there Proserpina,
> Turnus, Camilla, and I beat King Latinus,
> Whose daughter Lavinia became my bride,
> When I had all Italy under my rule.[86]

Aeneas was one of nine worthies depicted in the fresco, with the others being Alexander, Solomon, Hector, Achilles, Paris, Hercules, Samson and Julius Caesar. That not one but four heroes from the *Aeneid* were chosen for representation indicates the great interest in the Roman epic already present in the fourteenth century. Hercules and Samson, just as they often appeared in illustrations of the Triumph of Fame, were here given the same treatment as Aeneas. Of Hercules, the Florentine wrote, with few traces of the republican spirit that suffused the humanistic understanding of the hero in Florence:

> Hercules was I, most mighty giant.
> Worshipped by many as a god;
> I subdued almost the whole world
> And marked off where the seas can no longer be sailed.
> I beat all beasts, defeated by my fists,
> Among them even elephant and lion,
> And strangled the massive Antaeus
> Greater than I but not so adaptable,
> I did many things for love of Deianira
> Who was so beautiful to me, and pleased me so,
> As he now knows who felt my wrath
> Nessus I killed because he lay with her,
> He who still roams in Hell
> In the blood of the boiling waters

[86] Translation by Dunlop, *Painted Palaces,* 150.

And thus, in him, my death was born.[87]

Evidence that the personal preferences of patrons in terms of which luminaries to include in these types of designs and processions were taken into consideration comes in the way of a missive in 1441 to Piero de' Medici from an artist eager to finish his commissioned volume of the *Triumphs*. Matteo de Pasti briefly explains that a new technique he has learned for "using powdered gold like any other color" will enhance the appearance of the Triumphs, and create a unique effect on the composition.[88] He then requests that Piero decide whether he would prefer the personification of Fame to have "young men and ladies in her train or also famous old men."[89] These "old men" likely refer to both the ancient writers and philosophers that are often included in Fame's retinue, as well as war generals, leaders and heroes from mythology and history.

While Aeneas is generally absent in Fame's retinue in fifteenth-century illustrations of the *Triumphs* created in Florence, Petrarch makes references to the hero in his poem a number of times; first, when he mentions Scipio Africanus, who was essentially Petrarch's own version of Aeneas in his answer to the *Aeneid*, then as one of two famous unnamed Trojans, and finally, when he includes Virgil amongst the great writers and thinkers. To remind the reader of Aeneas' direct tie to Fame, Apollonio presents this personification processing directly toward the viewer with a kind of circular aureola behind her, which enhances the impact of her frontal orientation. (Fig. 1.5) Upon this flat expanse of blue, which puts one in mind of the precise shade employed in the Riccardiana manuscript to depict the sea, are scattered a handful of tiny ships with curving white sails.

Although each of the other illustrated triumphs is set within landscapes that include ships

[87] Translation by Dunlop, *Painted Palaces,* 150.
[88] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form* (London: Phaidon, 1966), 47.
[89] *Il Buonarroti*, serie ii, vol. IV (Rome, 1869) quoted in Gombrich, *Norm and Form*, 47.

somewhere in their composition, Fame is singular in that she is the only triumphal figure to whom they are directly appended. They function collectively as an attribute, in the same manner as the red figure of Victory in her left palm and the sword she grips in her right. These handsomely wrought vessels remind the viewer of the most essential quality or consequence of fame: that fame can exist only via transmission, whether by word of mouth, through painting, or through poetry. Thus, they essentially serve as vehicles of memory whose function it is to prompt the viewer's recollection of the earthly rewards of virtue. There were indeed other mythological heroes whose extraordinary adventures and resulting fame were in small or large part beholden to traveling over the sea, but none ever seemed to capture the imaginations of viewers as much as did Aeneas, to judge by the dearth in fifteenth-century imagery of Jason and Paris.

1.12 The Role of Emulation in Attaining Virtue

The emphasis on the important role of visual imagery in the quest to attain virtue was not a new idea in the fifteenth century, though it was certainly a cornerstone in humanist educational pedagogy. Rather, this trend was one that endured in practice from the medieval era, where it had its origins in the visualization of biblical stories within the context of artwork commissioned for churches. There was a close relationship between memory and visualization for this reason, and images played an important role in maintaining religious devotion through the process of visualizing the Stations of the Cross and other moments in Christian doctrine. Memory was important for both remembering narratives as relayed via texts, for those who were able to read, while visualization came into the frame with regard to focusing upon a mental picture in order to recall particular passages from biblical contexts. Thomas Aquinas, who was widely read and taught in the scholastic curriculum that preceded the humanist educational reforms in the

fourteenth century, tied virtue directly to the art of memory and visualization. The most important sense for purposes of memory and reformulating ideas that one wished to commit to memory, he noted, was the sense of sight.[90]

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, from the first century BCE, is an important manual on the art of rhetoric, and was, in the Renaissance, thought to have been written by Cicero. It was an integral text for both scholastic and humanistic curriculums. In this treatise, the anonymous author delineates two types of memory distinguishing them as "one natural, and the other the product of art."[91] He goes on to define natural memory as "that memory which is imbedded in our minds, born simultaneously with thought," and then follows with a description of the "the artificial memory" as "that memory which is strengthened by a kind of training and system of discipline."[92]

Another widely read text both in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance was Aristotle's *De anima* from the mid-fourth century BCE, in which he explains that the mind can only perceive or function as a sense through images that it conjures or that are deliberately placed within it. He states: "Since according to common agreement there is nothing outside and separate in existence from sensible spatial magnitudes, the objects of thought are in the sensible forms, viz. both the abstract objects and all the states and affections of sensible things. Hence, no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of sense, and when the mind is actively aware of anything it is necessarily aware of it along with an image; for images are like sensuous contents except in that they contain no matter."[93]

---

[90] Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 69; Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). See especially Yates' chapter 3, "The Art of Memory in the Middle Ages."
[91] Marcus T. Cicero and Harry Caplan, *Ad C. Herennium, De Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 3.16, 207.
[92] Cicero and Caplan, *Rhetorica ad Herennium,* 3.16, 207.
[93] Aristotle, *De anima*, Trans. J.A. Smith, 3.8, The Internet Classics Archive,

Cicero provides a tangible example of how one might strengthen the memory in his treatise, *On the Ideal Orator*. He tells the story of a poet named Simonides who had been invited to a banquet hosted by the wealthy nobleman, Scopas. At a certain point during the evening's festivities, Simonides was called out of the house to settle a dispute. During this time, the roof collapsed upon the diners inside, and all who attended perished in the accident. Because of the sheer strength of his memory, the poet was able to identify each person who had been killed, along with the order in which they had been sitting, for the easy identification of the now, otherwise unrecognizable, bodies. After the relatives of the victims recognized Simonides' impressive feat of memory, the poet reverse engineered how he had been able to accomplish it, thereby founding the art of memory. The system depended upon the selection of various localities, the order of which would "preserve the order of the things, while the images would represent the things themselves . . ."[94] Building upon this combination, Cicero tells us, a person could "use the localities like a wax tablet, and the representations like the letters written on it."[95] This was an extremely valuable system that was employed by Renaissance humanists and students alike in order to commit vast amounts of text to memory. By combining mental images with set orders, perhaps locations within a familiar room, one would be able to recall important details. This practice enhanced the degree to which an individual gazing at an image of a heroic figure like Aeneas could recall the essential moral qualities that they themselves should imitate in order to cultivate similar virtue.

1.13 The Power of Images and their Link to Exemplarity

Just how people of the Renaissance believed images worked is one of the most important

---

http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.3.iii.html (Accessed 1/24/2016).

[94] Marcus Tullius Cicero, James M. May, and Jakob Wisse, *Cicero on the Ideal Orator* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 219.

[95] Cicero et al., *Cicero on the Ideal Orator*, 219.

issues to consider in any effort to understand why, what, or how mythological heroes signified in the fifteenth century. This has much to do with the *ars memorativa* already discussed, but it also has to do with the belief that images held within them the power to compel or influence behavior. Perhaps the best way to understand this is from the perspective of those who feared that the wrong kinds of images would imprint bad patterns of behavior on those who viewed them, and in particular the most vulnerable of society. Young children and youth were often the main subjects (or cited as examples) for why it was prudent to eschew unbecoming imagery. The sermons and writings of preachers provide one avenue with which to begin understanding the potential that images were assumed to have with regard to influencing behavior. Chastising artists in his *Summa Theologica*, the Florentine Dominican friar Antonino writes that artists "commit an offense in it, when they create images provoking desire, not through beauty, but through their poses, as of naked women and the like."[96] That the viewer would be moved by poses is an important factor in understanding how viewers may have related to imagery. Certainly we can think of the heroic poses of Castagno's cycle of famous men as models of upright, virtuous behavior.[97]

Just as various poses might inflame someone to desire, as was Antonino's position on the matter, we can also assume that poses of strength would ignite a passion for masculine or feminine virtue, as depicted in upright characters. Antonino goes on to air his other grievances against the practices of some artists who he believes should be "reprimanded when they paint things contrary to the faith, when they make an image of the Trinity as one person with three heads, which is monstrous in the nature of things, or, in the Annunciation of the Virgin, a formed

[96] Creighton Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 148.
[97] Joseph Manca, "Moral Stance in Italian Renaissance Art: Image, Text, and Meaning," *Artibus et Historiae* 44 (2001): 51.

little child, that is Jesus, being sent into the womb of the Virgin, as if his body were not derived from the substance of the Virgin."[98] Though these seem inappropriate to the Dominican, since they are not in accordance with what he believes the scriptures mean, he goes on to explain that images should stimulate devotion, by citing examples of frivolities, as he sees them, in the stories of the saints in churches (like those with dogs and monkeys in them that cause people to laugh in amusement or sumptuous clothing of saints, which might cause viewers to become vain).[99]

A friar of Santa Maria Novella, Fra Giovanni Caroli, in 1479 sheds another perspective on this matter. In his *Lives of Some Brothers of the House of S. Maria Novella*, he praises the Spanish Chapel frescoes completed by Andrea da Firenze, as "most exceptional in the skills of the painting, on which not only is the eye feasted by its beauty and accomplishment, but also the mind is most forcibly set afire by its most holy meaning, to fervor of devotion."[100] In this case, the images themselves play a role in compelling the viewer to devotion, just as frescoes and other images of famous men and heroic figures were meant to incite a love of virtue and honor in their viewer.

1.14 Word and Image

The relationship between the written word and the act of visualization in the Renaissance is complex, but holds another key to understanding the ways that depictions of famous men operated as signs of exemplary virtue. Interestingly, a book could stand in for an image when the latter was not available for contemplation. In such cases, the "viewer" rested his gaze upon the object of the book, and then searched his memory for mental pictures that would illustrate the virtuous actions of the chosen exemplar. This act of "viewing" and the benefits it bestowed upon the viewer is vividly described in a letter written to the teenage Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, by his

[98] Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500,* 148.
[99] Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500,* 148.
[100] Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500,* 152-53.

tutor, Giovanni Pontano. Exhorting him to model his own actions and thoughts on the praiseworthy heroes of the past, he explains that "It is remarkable to what extent careful and thorough reading helps us train for the best manner of life. Sallust writes that Scipio had the habit of saying that the images of the ancients move to virtue in a remarkable way those who gaze upon them; but how much more should their words and their acts worthy of imitation move us . . .?"[101] Citing an example to which Alfonso could relate, he goes on to tell his charge, "Your grandfather never left on any expedition without books. . . . Not having any other images of the Fabii, the Marcelli, the Scipios, the Alexanders, the Caesars to contemplate, he would gaze upon the books that preserve their deeds. In this as in many other things, you who renew his name must imitate his example to the highest degree."[102]

To better understand the important impact of memory and poetry on the cultivation of virtue, it is instructive to consider just how these might have operated in practice. Like Poggio, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini believed that true nobility could only spring from virtue, as he says in a letter to the young King Ladislaus, who had dominion over Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia.[103] Admonishing the youth to remember his future role as leader of a kingdom, he tells him to remember that "the pursuit of learning, moreover, offers the greatest assistance in acquiring virtue."[104]

Justification for the exercise and honing of memory is provided by Piccolomini in his educational treatise, especially in the importance it attributes to the pursuit of virtue through imitation. He says "A good memory is a sign of intelligence in children, and such a memory has

---

[101] Giovanni Pontano, *De principe*, ed. Guido M. Capelli (Rome: Salerno, 2003), 26-28; See translation in Susan Gaylard, *Hollow Men: Writing, Objects, and Public Image in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 43-44.
[102] Pontano, *De principe*, 26-28; See translation in Gaylard, *Hollow Men*, 43-44.
[103] Craig W. Kallendorf, "Introduction," *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), xii.
[104] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, in Kallendorf, Ed.,Trans., *Humanist Educational,Treatises,* 129.

threefold virtues: it perceives effortlessly, it retains faithfully, and it imitates with ease. Something must be committed to memory daily, whether verses or important maxims from illustrious authors. For memory is called the storeroom of knowledge and learning, and in the fables it is called the mother of the Muses because it begets and nourishes."[105]

With regard to the importance of the poets in the young boy's education, Piccolomini explains, "The ancients laid it down that one's readings should commence with Homer and Vergil, even though more mature judgment is needed to comprehend their virtues. But there is plenty of time to acquire that; these authors will be read more than once. In the meantime, the child's mind will be exalted by the sublimity of heroic verse, and he will be inspired by great affairs and endowed with the noblest sentiments, as Augustine, too, notes approvingly in the first book of his *City of God.*"[106]

Piccolomini anticipated the anti-classical backlash his young charge (and the teachers whose duty it was to educate Ladislaus according in large part to the curriculum Piccolomini here sets out) might receive in Hungary, where he would rule, so he provides him with some understanding of how to answer the charge that reading ancient poetry and other types of works from the classical world was detrimental to the moral development of a Christian leader. He explains that those who would wish him to abandon the ancient writings might argue, "Did not your Cicero, whom you follow, whom you admire, say in his *Tusculan Disputations* that the poets were rightly banished by Plato from his imaginary state, since he required the best morals and the best condition for his republic?"[107] To this, Piccolomini responds in the following way: "Let me respond briefly to these critics. [. . .] The citation from Plato given by Cicero can be easily deflected. Hear what Cicero added shortly afterward — these are his own words: 'But why

[105] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 179.
[106] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 209.
[107] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 211.

are we angry with the poets? Some philosophers, teachers of virtue, may be found who said that pain was the greatest of evils.' And immediately he cites a great many examples of philosophers who introduced a pernicious doctrine."[108]

Piccolomini does concede that poetry can be a mixed bag, so he cautions his young charge to seek the roses of truth and virtue while taking care to avoid the thorns scattered throughout the bush.[109] As for curriculum, he notes, "Among the epic poets your teacher shall prefer Vergil above all, whose eloquence, whose glory, is so great that it can be neither augmented by praise nor diminished by censure."[110] To his suggested reading list, he adds Ovid, who is "always refined and delightful" even if a bit "wanton." Especially his *Metamorphoses* should be read and studied, "for the sake of the knowledge of myths he imparts, which is of no small profit to learn." He finishes his recommendation of poets to be read with "Claudian and the author of the *Argonauticon,*" which "are by no means to be despised."[111]

Finally, Piccolomini prescribes that Ladislaus' education be rounded out with some instruction in music. Musing about the origins of music, the author of the treatise indicates that it is the hero Orpheus to whom this credit should be given, at least according to the poets, since he predates Pythagoras, to whom the honor is sometimes accorded by the pagans.[112] The reasons he gives for becoming at least passable as a musician, if not proficient, are that they provide a pleasant diversion at banquets, citing "the custom among the ancients that the praises of heroes and gods should be chanted at their banquets to the sound of the zither" and the fact that music provides a much desired link to "knowledge of the divine" as is confirmed by Vergil's Ioppas,

[108] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 212-13.
[109] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 219.
[110] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 221.
[111] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 221.
[112] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 251.

who sings "of the wandering moon and the labors of the sun . . ."[113] Music also "refreshes the spirit and cheers the mind for enduring hardship."[114] This sentiment thus points to the utility of music in helping to accomplish other difficult labors in the pursuit of virtue, ensuring a lasting immortality through fame for those who were successful.

1.15 In Pursuit of Fame

One Florentine for whom the concept of fame would prove to be a lifelong preoccupation and highest ambition is Leon Battista Alberti, a polymath of Florentine birth, whom Jacob Burckhardt lauded as the true Renaissance man, or *l'uomo universale*.[115] He was also considered by the same historian to be one of very few "all-sided" men to emerge during this era of European history.[116] Burckhardt's apt characterization can certainly be detected in the ways Alberti meticulously cultivated both his personal characteristics and his professional accomplishments to ensure that his name would be known to many, paupers and princes alike. That his treatise on painting was addressed to two distinct audiences—artists and learned patrons—can be gleaned from the fact that he wrote a Tuscan and Latin version of the same text. As the writer of the treatise, he used his pen to create the conditions necessary for artists to receive recognition for their talent and training, while patrons, as the supporters of artists, received accolades for their shrewd taste and discernment in artistic works, thereby creating a sense of responsibility between patron and artist.

Alberti strove to match his professional virtues in kind with his personal virtues, as can be gleaned from what many believe is his autobiography, left unfinished at his death. By his own admission, he not only had the physical strength needed to leap over the head of another human

[113] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 249.
[114] Piccolomini, *The Education of Boys*, 249.
[115] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance In Italy,* vol. 1, (New York: Harper, 1958), 147-150.
[116] Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, 147-148; Burckhardt defines the fifteenth century as one populated with many-sided men, but he characterizes Alberti as an all-sided man.

being from a resting position with feet together and to flip a coin so that it could be heard hitting the highest ceiling of the city, but he was an ace pole-vaulter and javelin thrower, a perceptive reader of fortunes and futures to come (having accurately "predicted the fortunes of the papacy as they were to unfold over the next twelve years, and […] foretold the actions of many other cities and princes . . ."),[117] a tamer of wild horses, in possession of methods utilized to wean himself from any behavior he deemed unbecoming or weak (such as his inexplicable aversions to garlic and honey), and finally, endowed with a patience so unshakeable that his ability to endure the annoying, the malodorous, the envious, the malicious, the rumor mongers, the idiots, the political imbeciles, and all those who wished him harm (often family), was legendary.[118]

Though a topic of great interest to Alberti and treated at some length in many of his works, his most direct and sustained treatment of the concept of fame can be found in his satirical text, *Momus*. In an intricate plot that involves the god of blame, Momus, and his interaction with his fellow deities, as well as humans on earth, Alberti highlights the dual nature of renown, which can render one either famous or infamous. After his ignominious expulsion from Olympus, Momus navigates the earthly realm as mischievously as ever, encouraging mortals to pray for frivolous and many things, in order to irk his fellow gods, who are required to listen to such entreaties each day.[119] Not surprisingly, the sudden influx of prayers and the gods' obligation to hear and grant them on a grand scale steadily contributes to their deep and ever deepening resentment of Momus. Meanwhile, the goddess of Virtue takes up residence on earth. Her sons, Triumph and Trophy, and her daughters, Praise and Posterity, reside with her, and as a

[117] Renée Watkins, "L.B. Alberti in the Mirror: An Interpretation of the 'Vita' with a New Translation," *Italian Quarterly* 112 (1989): 14-15.
[118] Watkins, "L.B. Alberti in the Mirror," 7-17.
[119] Leon Battista Alberti, Sarah Knight, and Virginia Brown, *Momus* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 56-61.

result, are vociferously worshipped by heroes and all those who wish to attain heroic status.[120]

One day, Momus catches a glimpse of beautiful Praise and simply cannot contain his lust for her. He transforms himself into crawling ivy and manages to penetrate her lofty fortress at the pinnacle of a tower, where he finds the object of his obsession busy brushing her hair and gazing at her reflection while the rest of her family sleeps. Noticing the leaves shivering in the wind, which she imagines for a moment to be applause, Praise fashions a leafy crown of ivy for her head. After this unexpected contact is made, Momus resolves to wait no longer and proceeds to rape her. From this violent union of Praise and Blame is almost immediately born the terrible and monstrous Rumor, who, "in addition to its other foul and horrible features, . . . possessed one truly incredible characteristic: it was as thick with eyes, ears, and darting tongues as its ivy parent had been with leaves."[121] When finally the monster is launched unceremoniously out of the window by Virtue, it flies into the world on quick and agile wings, seeking and disseminating rumors about mortals and gods at lightning speed, caring not at all whether the information it spreads concerns praiseworthy or blameworthy deeds.

Alberti's characterization of rumor, or *fama*, in the original Latin, owes much to Virgil's earlier treatment of this particular concept in the *Aeneid*. The poet, unlike Alberti, first mentions rumor in a relatively positive light, just as the invisible Aeneas and his friend encounter the imposing murals that depict the events of the Trojan War in a Carthaginian temple. The hero, though heartbroken again to see the terrible destruction of his city, is nevertheless pleased to see that the valor of his people as depicted in the murals is emphasized against the treacherous, loathsome acts of violence perpetrated by the Greeks, and that word of their heroic defense of the city has traveled so quickly to all corners of the earth. Later, as Dido suffers Aeneas' absence

[120] Alberti et al., *Momus*, 41.
[121] Alberti et al., *Momus*, 71.

with a heavy heart, Virgil paints rumor in a far darker light when he describes: "At once Rumour runs through Libya's great cities – Rumour the swiftest of all evils. Speed lends her strength, and she winds vigour as she goes; small at first through fear, soon she mounts up to heaven, and walks the ground with head hidden in the clouds. Mother Earth, provoked to anger against the gods, brought her forth last, they, say as sister to Coeus and Enceladus, swift of foot and fleet of wing, a monster awful and huge, who for the many feathers in her body has as many watchful eyes beneath – wondrous to tell – as many tongues, as many sounding mouths, as many pricked-up ears."[122]

In his absurd satire, *Momus*, Alberti is commenting directly on the various constructs of fame by placing Praise and Blame together, albeit in a violent union. The rhetorical exercise of praise-and-blame was discussed by Aristotle in his *Art of Rhetoric*, and then later employed in the word portraits of illustrious men, by Cicero and Suetonius. Likewise, in the fifteenth century, this approach known more formally as epideictic rhetoric, was frequently employed in the written biographies of illustrious men, both ancient and contemporary. Alberti's formulation casts Rumor as the beastly offspring of a violent union of Praise and Blame, who cannot be thwarted, stopped, or tamed, even by one of super-human strength, like Hercules. In his *De commodis litterarum atque incommodis*, Alberti provides words of advice for those in search of fame, stating that "they should close themselves up at home and keep outside everything that is elegant, pleasurable, and admired, so as to confine themselves to knowledge of literature with as much constancy as possible."[123]

That fame was frequently on the minds of fifteenth-century Florentines can likewise be detected in the types of possessions that they surrounded themselves with in the domestic sphere.

[122] Virgil, H. Rushton Fairclough, and G. P. Goold. *Virgil.* Rev. ed. with new introduction (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 435.
[123] Quoted in Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 36.

Far from taking Alberti's advice to "keep outside everything elegant, pleasurable, and admired",[124] Florentine abodes were outfitted with sumptuous furnishings that referenced this very preoccupation. For example, in the 1492 inventory listing the furniture in the Medici palace at the time of Lorenzo il Magnifico's death, there are noted "Four bench-back tapestries, two with the Triumph of Fame and two with the Triumph of Love, each 12 br. long" as well as "a door curtain on which is the Triumph of Fame, beautiful."[125] The tapestries, together with the two matching seat covers featuring "crested helmets and the Medici arms and feathers,"[126] were valued at 200 florins, which was a substantial financial outlay at this time. The door curtain with the same theme cost 20 florins. In addition, Lorenzo kept in his personal bedchamber two "forzieri of 3.5 br. each, on which are depicted the Triumphs by Petrarch" valued at 25 florins, and "a birth salver depicting the Triumph of Fame" at 10 florins.[127] The birth salver, or *desco da parto*, had been commissioned for Lorenzo's mother by Piero de' Medici to hold the sweetmeats it was customary to provide a woman in the lying in or confinement period following the birth of a child. As Jacqueline Marie Musacchio and others have noted, common themes depicted on these round trays included Petrarch's triumphs, usually of love or chastity.[128] More unusual is the depiction of the Triumph of Fame in this context, which indicates the hopes Piero de' Medici had for the bright future of his son, whose birth into a world of privilege and a prestigious family would provide the foundation for his later renown. (Fig. 1.6) In this birth tray by the artist commonly known as Lo Scheggia, a crowd of men on horseback, many in ceremonial armor,

[124] Quoted in Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 36.
[125] Richard Stapleford, ed. and trans., *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492*, (University Park, PA.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 68-69.
[126] Stapleford, *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home,* 68-69.
[127] Stapleford, *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home,* 87.
[128] Jacqueline M. Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 59-79; Elizabeth L'Estrange, "Deschi da Parto and Topsy-Turvy Gender Relations in Fifteenth-Century Italian Households," *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities In Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600-1530,* Eds. Elizabeth L'Estrange and Alison More (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011), 127.

reach eagerly with outstretched arms to the personification of Fame balanced on a spherical globe above them. She is positioned in front of a waterway dotted with ships that serve as reference to both exceptional deeds and the dissemination of reputation around the world. Looking out of the picture plane from a central point in the composition is a young boy dressed in bright yellow, whose gaze seems to both encourage and admonish the beholder to keep the pursuit of Fame foremost on his mind.

If fame was the common goal, then it was the acquisition of virtue (or the appearance of being virtuous) that provided the proper means to this end. In his sermons, the Florentine preacher Giovanni Dominici stresses the importance of virtue to the health of a republic. A republic is only as strong as its citizens and those who represent the citizens. Personal virtue and integrity, therefore, are exceptionally important in this context. Dominici's scathing assessment of the health of the republic during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries indicates that there was an audience for whom the oligarchic factions then in power were not doing the kind of job they were expected to do. Dominici often stressed the Roman roots of Florence, and in this he echoed humanists like Salutati and Leonardo Bruni.

Giovanni Dominici states in one of his many sermons that those who rule Florence must be moral models for those whom they govern.[129] Going further, these leaders must correct and punish the bad behavior of others when it occurs. This role of the leader, as both moral exemplar and guide for others in their own quest for moral superiority can be likened to that of a fifteenth-century Florentine father, whose status as head of the household also required him to enforce good behavior in its members. Dominici says that "those who rule and govern others must be an

[129] Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici in Renaissance Florence, 1400-1406," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55.1 (Spring, 2002): 37.

example of virtue and knowledge"[130] From the letters and other writings of humanists who hoped to find patronage with the Medici, we learn the degree to which this family of leaders was praised for cultivating moral virtue that sustained their civic profiles. Ficino, writing to Niccolo Michelozzi on the 21st of January, in 1473, enthusiastically opines, "May God love me, Niccolo! I speak the truth when I say that no one was closer or dearer to me than the great Cosimo. I recognized in that old man not human virtue, but the virtue of a Hero."[131] No doubt because he strove to emulate his grandfather's laudable example, Ficino is able to identify in Lorenzo the same qualities, writing, "That splendour of Cosimo now shines daily from our Lorenzo in many forms, bringing light to the Latin people and glory to the Florentine Republic."[132]

1.16 Expressions of Virtue and Fame in the Ideal City

The concept of Fame and the virtue required to attain it plays a significant role not only in ideas of city leadership, but also in the arrangement of institutions within the urban fabric. Expressions of virtue and their specific contribution to the creation of fame are treated at great length in the architectural treatise of Filarete, within which he sets forth his own vision of the ideal city. In the course of his conversation with the young son of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, in which they discuss possible themes for decorating "the entrance of the court, that is the cortile with a portico around it,"[133] Filarete aptly dissuades the eager little student from painting the façade with "ancient battles of the Romans . . . as for example the one with Porsenna when he was encamped before Rome, Horatio breaking the bridge, Mucius Scaevola burning his arm, and several others."[134] Though the architect acknowledges that these subjects would indeed "be

[130] Debby, "Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici," 35-36.
[131] Marsilio Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 1 (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 1975), 66-67.
[132] Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 1, 66-67.
[133] The court to which Filarete refers is to be the main residence of Duke Sforza.
[134] Filarete and John R. Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture: Being the Treatise by Antonio di Piero Averlino, Known as Filarete* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), Book IX, 67v and 68r, 117-118.

beautiful," he suggests instead that the walls be painted with illustrious figures from history. He also posits a somewhat surprising reason for eschewing scenes of battle for portraits of individual men: that it would be less time consuming to do the latter. Speaking to his young charge, he continues, "I thought we could do more quickly all the famous men who have existed from the beginning of the world up to our own times."[135] It is surprising not because it is difficult to fathom that indeed it would be more efficient to paint portraits than to paint intricate scenes of battle. What is surprising is actually the scope of the work that he proposes, which is so large that it is difficult to imagine a quick execution. Referring obliquely to the frescoes of famous men in Cardinal Orsini's *teatro*, Filarete says it should resemble "a hall in Rome where all the ages and times and the men who lived in that age are painted in such a way that it is a noble and beautiful hall."[136] Perhaps the reason Filarete believed it would have been accomplished more hastily than the battle scenes proposed by his young interlocutor is because models, such as the expansive Orsini frescoes, were available in such abundance that not only would the work go quickly in terms of devising the scheme, but there were artists like Castagno and others who had already had experience creating such large programs.

The proposed frescoes of famous men, unlike the Orsini program, were not for an interior space. Instead, Filarete's ideal location for this heady theme is underneath the portico in the courtyard of the ideal palazzo. There is no doubt a practical reason for this choice, as the walled spaces underneath the portico of the courtyard would provide space vast enough for the execution of such an expansive program. Placed as the portico was at the front entrance to the court, it also served as a reminder to all who entered of the illustriousness of the patron, and the importance of remembering great men of the past. In the imaginary program described by

[135] Filarete and Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture,* Book IX, 68r and 68v, 117-118.
[136] Filarete and Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture,* Book IX, 68r, 118.

Filarete, he painted "under the portico all the ages and the famous men, in whatever branches of learning, who were worthy of being recorded in whatever time they existed."[137] Underneath, similarly to the Orsini fresco and the fourteenth-century *uomini famosi* cycle for which Salutati did the *tituli*, Filarete added a brief epigram consisting of the individual's name and the reason they had been chosen for inclusion in this world chronicle. Filarete goes on to enumerate some of the famous men depicted in the fresco, usually focusing on the first and last person of each age, over the course of several pages.

In book eighteen, the architect describes just how he would depict Virtue. Eschewing Seneca's conceptualization of virtue personified as a woman dressed in white, Filarete designs a personification that is an armed man whose "head would be like the sun. In the right hand he holds a date tree and in the left a laurel. He stands erect on a diamond and from the base of this diamond there issues a mellifluous liquid. Fame was above his head."[138] Thus, Filarete's concept of Virtue seems to promise Fame as its reward, and indeed, the building that he proposes – the house of Virtue and Vice – is a place where men may choose wisely and be rendered famous or foolishly and be rendered infamous. The entire House of Virtue rests on the idea that within, people could strive to prove themselves in various contests of spirit, mind, and skill. For their efforts, they would be rewarded with a garland or other appropriate token.[139]

Filarete also envisions a portrait of himself positioned on the façade, serving as part of the ornament. This, he believes, is his own reward for creating such an intricate and novel design for the personifications of Virtue and Vice. Beneath his portrait bust would be inscribed his name, followed by a longer inscription that detailed the value of his accomplishment in having designed the complex of Vice and Virtue. Enhancing the effect of this commemoration, the

[137] Filarete and Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture,* Book IX, 68r, 118.
[138] Filarete and Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture*, Book XVIII, 143r, 246.
[139] Filarete and Spencer, *Treatise on Architecture*, Book XVIII, 143r–151r, 246-259.

spaces surrounding his portrait are replete with personifications of Will, Reason, Fame, Memory and Intelligence, which together represent the artist's desire to preserve for posterity his own best qualities.

Because images were so central to the internalization of virtue, it is no surprise that patrons who commissioned such programs for their own homes were concerned with the accuracy of each individual's features in visual representations. Following a number of sources, including Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dictys, Dares, and a translation by Leonardo Bruni of Philostratus' *De deorum imaginibus et heroum* among others, Salutati surmised in a letter to Malatesta "dei sonnetti" Malatesta that Hector was an individual that "would have been clad in purple shot with crocus yellow or gold, as the Trojans were, but it was not clear whether he had a good head of hair or not."[140] The confusion as to hair length is likely due to the fact that in Philostratus' account, the interlocutor describes Hector as harboring an especial dislike for Paris, and: "In truth, Hektor thought that to have long hair, even though it is treated with respect by princes and the children of princes, was despicable for himself because of that man."[141] Further information provided by Philostratus about Hector's appearance that Salutati may have known is that he was around 30 years of age when he was killed on the field of battle and dragged around the Trojan walls behind the chariot, and that he was rather pleasant and large.[142] In another section, Philostratus' interlocutor, the vine dresser, tells of a sculpture of Hector in Ilion that "resembles a semi-divine human being and reveals many delineations of his character to one inspecting it with the right perspective. In fact, he appears high-spirited, fierce, radiant, and with the splendor of full health and strength, and he is beautiful despite his short hair. The statue is something so alive

[140] Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces*, 165-166.
[141] Philostratus, Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean, and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, *On Heroes* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 61.
[142] Philostratus et al., *On Heroes,* 61.

that the viewer is drawn to touch it."[143] It also apparently sweated during the games held in Hector's honor, a detail that confirms the incredible life-like quality of the sculptural likeness.

Of Aeneas, Philostratus reports:

> But Aeneas, although inferior to Hektor as a fighter, surpassed the Trojans in intelligence and was considered worthy of the same honors as Hektor. He knew well the intentions of the gods, which had been fated for him once Troy had been captured, but he was not struck with panic by any fear, for he had intelligence and good judgment, especially in frightening situations. While the Achaeans called Hektor the hand of the Trojans, they called Aeneas the mind. He presented matters to them more prudently than did the madly raging Hektor. They were both of the same age and height, and although Aeneas's appearance seemed less radiant, he resembled Hektor more when that man had settled down, and he wore his hair long without offense. He did not adorn his hair, nor was he enslaved to it. Instead, he made virtue alone his adornment, and he looked at things so vehemently that even his glance itself was sufficient against the unruly.[144]

Philostratus' description of Aeneas, which contains not only his physical characteristics, but also the most admirable aspects of his character, is one that was utilized often in Renaissance depictions of the *Aeneid*. This suggests that Florentines admired the heroic Aeneas more for his piety, virtue, and ability to apply reason to complex situations than for his fighting prowess—the

[143] Philostratus et al., *On Heroes,* 26.
[144] Philostratus et al., *On Heroes,* 62.

latter of which Virgil highlights frequently in his epic but is seldom depicted in Renaissance art.

1.17 Conclusion

The mythological hero in the Florentine *zeitgeist* of the early Renaissance retained vestiges of the armor of Christian virtue that the hero had first donned in the Middle Ages, but had by the fifteenth century, been re-clothed in the Roman concept of virtù. This reconstitution of the nature of the hero appended a secular dimension to virtue that corresponded to the educational imperatives of humanism as applied civic action. The heroic ideal was also infused with the Greek concept of *kleos*, or glory, which provided the hero with a sense of temporal continuity that both embraced historical time and pointed to an earthly, secular opportunity for immortality that extended beyond, and coexisted alongside, the Christian concept of heavenly glory.

Timothy Hampton emphasizes the centrality of narrative to the concept of heroic exemplarity in the humanist contexts of education and civic responsibility in the early Renaissance. While his study of exemplarity is concerned primarily with historical figures, and a definition of history that includes "both deeds done in the past and the narratives that recount them,"[145] aspects of his argument for how individuals were meant to model themselves on famous individuals of the past in order to prompt present and future action in the civic sphere can be expanded to consider the importance of visual images and mythological heroes to this process of fashioning the self. He links the rhetoric of exemplarity to the renewed interest in the Roman style which "brought a new appreciation of pagan moral philosophy, wherein the emphasis on virtuous public action neatly fit the administrative and diplomatic requirements of Italian civic

[145] Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 8.

life."[146] This need for virtuous comportment within the civic institutions of the city is echoed by humanists in the fifteenth century, and will be further explored in the case studies that follow.

[146] Hampton, *Writing From History,* 14-15.

Fig. 1.1 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Triumph of Time*, illustration from Petrarch's *Triumphs,* 1442, Medici-Laurenziana Library, Ms. Pal. 72, c. 86v, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 1.2 Portrait of *Dante*, Detail of badly abraded fresco in Palazzo del Proconsolo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 1.3 Andrea del Castagno*, Famous Men Series*, c. 1451, Digital Reconstruction by Lew Minter of fresco in Villa Carducci, Legnaia, Italy.

Fig. 1.4 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Triumph of Fame*, illustration from Petrarch's *Triumphs,* 1442, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Ms. Pal. 72, c. 84r, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 1.5 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Triumph of Fame*, c. 1460, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1129, c. 33r, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 1.6 Giovanni di ser Giovanni Guidi (Lo Scheggia), *Triumph of Fame*, 1449, desco da parto, Tempera, silver, and gold on panel, with frame, diameter 36 1/2 in. (92.7 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

CHAPTER 2

PICTURING AENEAS IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENTINE ART

2.1 Introduction

Enthusiasm for Virgil's *Aeneid* rarely waned in the centuries following his death in 19 BCE. Embraced as an important text for the education of students almost as soon as the poet died, it continued to be plumbed for grammatical, allegorical, and moral purposes throughout the medieval period and the Renaissance.[147] In his epic poem, Virgil introduces readers to the displaced Trojan hero just as he is struggling for survival upon a churning sea. Having fled with son, father, and other survivors of the violent Greek destruction of Troy, Aeneas sails for Italy, where he is destined to establish the famous lineage that will eventually lead to the founding of Rome. On his journey, Aeneas is constantly derailed and besieged with obstacles, courtesy of the vengeful goddess Juno. One memorable interlude finds him on the shores of Libya, where he meets Queen Dido of Carthage and witnesses the construction of a flourishing new city. At the feast held in his honor, Aeneas recounts the terrible events that led to the burning of Troy.

Though not visually represented in the city of Florence before the fifteenth century, Aeneas' adventures were well known in educated circles by way of Virgil's *Aeneid*, available by then in both Latin and the Tuscan vernacular. Petrarch's interpretation of the poem as an encomium to virtue and a condemnation of vice persisted into the fifteenth century, when a new generation of humanists treated the subject in their writings and included the poem in the curriculum of the *studia humanitatis*. Among the most famous was Cristoforo Landino, who produced a lengthy commentary on the poem, and in a treatise examining the *summum bonum*, or ideal life, provided an allegorical reading of Aeneas's journey as the progress of a soul moving

[147] Craig Kallendorf, *In Praise of Aeneas: Virgil and Epideictic Rhetoric in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Hannover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1989), 1–18.

from a life of pleasure to one of ideal virtue.[148] Landino also lectured extensively on the *Aeneid* in 1462 while serving as a professor at Florence's university.

2.2 Aeneas in Visual Representation

Coinciding with the immense popularity of Virgil's poem amongst the educated and elite citizens of Florence was a renewed interest in visual representations of Aeneas. The re-emergence of the Trojan hero as an artistic subject in the middle decades of the Quattrocento can in large part be attributed to the Florentine painter and illuminator, Apollonio di Giovanni. The demand for painted representations of Virgil's poem provides an ideal opportunity to explore how Apollonio, in carrying out the wishes of his patrons, both preserved and altered the poetic origins of a subject translated into a visual medium. In his depictions of Aeneas, Apollonio incorporates and re-interprets poetic language and devices in such a way as to preserve the narrative's affective qualities in painted form.

In the successful workshop that Apollonio owned with fellow artist Marco del Buono, he produced two complete sets of cassone panels, an illustrated manuscript of the *Aeneid*, and a handful of single panels representing Virgil's hero.[149] Of the extant works, some of the most finely wrought panels are the pair in the Niedersächsische Landesgalerie in Hannover and the set in the Jarves collection at Yale University. (Figs. 2.1–2.4) Although the panels are impossible to date with precision from surviving evidence, scholars have convincingly argued that they were painted in the 1450s, while a lavishly illustrated but unfinished manuscript commonly referred to as the Riccardiana Virgil was created in the years just before the artist's death in 1465.[150]

---

[148] Thomas H. Stahel and Cristoforo Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*: Books III and IV of the *Camaldolese Disputations*," Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1968.
[149] Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 52-75.
[150] E. H Gombrich, "Apollonio di Giovanni: A Florentine *Cassone* Workshop Seen through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18.1/2 (1955): 19–20; Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, 7; Gombrich favors a late date, believing Apollonio's death in 1465 likely explains why the manuscript was left unfinished.

Commissioned as part of the counter-dowry a groom provided for his bride, elaborately painted *cassoni* were filled with the bride's trousseau and displayed during the course of marriage festivities. Afterwards, installed in the nuptial quarters, they served to store clothing and other belongings. An important function of cassone paintings was to provide moralizing messages to the newlyweds. Subjects chosen for representation in this context were often gleaned from classical mythology or history, and could show a positive model of virtue to follow, or the negative consequences of vice to avoid, for the married couple.

In the Renaissance, as in the ancient world, poetry and painting were perceived to be parallel arts. This close relationship served to heighten the competition for accolades and fame for practitioners, and incited friendly debates in which the merits of each art were enumerated and extolled. It was undoubtedly this view that prompted Ugolino Verino, a young fifteenth-century poet, to flatter Apollonio di Giovanni at the expense of the ancient poets from whom the artist had derived his subject matter. In an epigram composed between 1458 and 1464, Verino praises the contemporary artist's skill in rendering the hero Aeneas by drawing attention to both the methods and products of poets and painters—it is worth quoting at length:

> Once Homer sang of the walls of Apollo's Troy burned on Greek pyres, and again Virgil's great work proclaimed the wiles of the Greeks and the ruins of Troy. But certainly the Tuscan Apelles Apollonius now painted burning Troy better for us. And also the flight of Aeneas and the wrath of iniquitous Juno, with the rafts tossed about, he painted with wondrous skill; no less the threats of Neptune, as he rides across the high seas and bridles and stills the swift winds. He painted how Aeneas, accompanied by his faithful

> Achates, enters Carthage in disguise; also his departure and the funeral of unhappy Dido are to be seen on the painted panel by the hand of Apollonius.[151]

As Ernst Gombrich first noted, the laudatory epigram refers to a lost panel painting; in Apollonio's surviving work, the death of Dido and the departure of Aeneas from Carthage are nowhere represented, and examples of Aeneas' flight and burning Troy can be found not on panels but in his unfinished manuscript.[152] Nevertheless, the short poem provides some insight into the specific appeal that Apollonio's representations of Virgil's hero held for Florentine audiences. Here we glean that just as Virgil's ability to create vivid pictures in readers' minds elicited admiration, Apollonio's talent for transforming these vaunted verses into painted representations was praiseworthy.

Of particular interest in exploring the issue of interpreting a poetic subject for painted representation is the expressive language Ugolino uses to compare Apollonio's skill with the abilities of his ancient forebears. Paralleling Apollonio's painting with Homer's singing and Virgil's proclaiming, Ugolino indicates that the skillful manipulation of pigments with brush has proven a more effective way to represent the tumult of Aeneas' journey than words, whether spoken or written. By providing the Florentine artist with a lofty epithet—he calls him the Tuscan Apelles—Verino also praises Apollonio's ability to create scenes as lifelike as those of the famed early Hellenistic Greek artist described by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History.*

In the first New Haven panel, Juno's wrath and iniquity are revealed as she demands that the reluctant Aeolus release the winds. (Fig. 2.3) The winds as Apollonio has painted them are delightfully animated. (Fig. 2.5) Each is named and labeled, in keeping with Virgil's poem, but

[151] Ugolino Verino, "De Apollonio pictore insigni," *Flametta*, Book II, no. viii, as translated from the Latin by Ernst Gombrich in "Apollonio di Giovanni," 17.
[152] Gombrich "Apollonio di Giovanni,"18.

in his visual translation, the artist has provided the personified gusts with wind instruments so as to help the viewer imagine the terrible wailing din they make as they bear down upon the ships. The incredible power of the gale force winds is conveyed by the sheer chaos that unfolds upon the suddenly stormy, dark sea. In keeping with Virgil's description, Apollonio has painted broken masts, whipping sails, and hapless Trojans falling and sinking into the sea. The "precious things of Troy,"[153] shields, and planks are all depicted bobbing in the waves. Neptune glides "over the wave-tops on light wheels"[154] from the viewer's right, leaving in his wake calm waters, a shining sun, and a colorful rainbow. (Fig. 2.6) Using a combination of imaginative flourishes and details gleaned directly from the poem, Apollonio has created an engaging scene that contributes to the narrative's visual impact upon the viewer and retains the spirit and energy of Virgil's poem. The proximity of Neptune to the violence of the storms provides viewers with a heightened sense of the instantaneous calm that Virgil's account describes.

A challenge Apollonio faced in his task to translate words on a page to paint on a panel was the question of how to effectively represent a narrative of such density—the *Aeneid* travels wildly between past, present, and future, between memory and experience—into a coherent, meaningful, and delightful composition within a limited, two-dimensional space. As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing famously noted in his *Laocoon* and as other scholars including Paul Barolsky have pointed out more recently, this challenge is directly related to the differences that comprise the inherent nature of each art.[155]

As a temporal art, poetry relays its narrative over time. Readers follow the narrative from one word to the next, sequencing the events within their minds and imaginations just as the poet

[153] Virgil and Robert Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid* (New York: Random House, 1983), 1. 165.
[154] Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, 1. 200.
[155] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Robert Phillimore, *Laocoon* (London: Macmillan, 1874); Paul Barolsky, "There Is No Such Thing As Narrative Art," *Arion* 18.2 (2010): 49-62.

prescribes. Painting, on the other hand, is defined by elements arranged in space. All that is represented within the space of a painting can be apprehended in one glance when viewed from the correct distance. Though we often speak of "reading" a painting, as indeed they did in the Renaissance, viewers are nevertheless free to consider the scenes in whichever order they prefer. They might permit themselves to be guided by the artist's visual cues, or, when familiar with the composition, let their eyes wander from scene to scene by drawing upon their own memories of the particular poetic narrative that the painting represents.[156] Despite these significant differences, subjects may be interpreted literally, morally, or allegorically, in both poetry and painting.

The scenes Apollonio depicted on the Hannover panels were likely chosen in conjunction with his patron, but it was the artist's task to arrange them so that they were presented in the most pleasing way possible. As becomes evident, Apollonio privileged setting over temporal sequence. There are eleven scenes from the first book of the *Aeneid* represented on the first panel. (Fig. 2.7) The eye must hopscotch up and down, from one side to the other and back again, to "read" the scenes in narrative order: 1) We see Trojans arrive on the Libyan coast 2) as Venus appears to Aeneas and Achates, disguised as a huntress 3) to give Aeneas the news that the ships he feared lost in the storm are safe. 4) Aeneas and his friend Achates examine Carthage from a distance 5) before entering the temple of Juno to gaze at the murals in disguise. 6) As the Carthaginians menace the Trojans, whom they fear to be enemies, 7) Dido welcomes Aeneas and companions, 8) then invites them to a feast in her palace 9) while bulls, lambs, and swine provided by the queen are sent to the Trojan ships. 10) Venus transforms her son Amor to look like Ascanius, so that he may cause Dido to fall in love with Aeneas while 11) Trojans retrieve

[156] Adrian W. B. Randolph, "Unpacking *Cassoni*: Marriage, Ritual, Memory," *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, ed. Cristelle Baskins (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2008), 26-28.

gifts for Dido from the ships. In contrast with the busy composition of the first panel, the second includes only three scenes: 1) Dido presides over the feast held in Aeneas' honor, and then jumping forward in time to the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, 2) Apollonio depicts the lively hunt that ends abruptly as Juno sends a violent storm. 3) A final vignette features Aeneas placing his arm amorously around Dido as they gallop into a dark cave to shelter from the rain. (Fig. 2.8)

When viewed side-by-side, as they would have been positioned for display, it becomes apparent that Apollonio has concentrated the major architectural elements in the center of the tableau in order to show the continuity of time, while natural elements of sea and forest frame either side and contain scenes that indicate ruptures in narrative time. (Figs. 2.9–2.10) By privileging the events that occur in the Temple of Juno (goddess of marriage) in the first panel and the subsequent feast on the second, Apollonio also subtly relates these moments in Virgil's poem to the events for which the *cassoni* had been commissioned – to mark the marriage and related festivities of an elite Florentine couple.

One of the most well known examples of literary ekphrasis can be found in the first book of the *Aeneid*, when Virgil details Aeneas' emotional reaction and relief upon encountering the murals on the walls of the temple of Juno. These paintings depict the harrowing moments that led to the destruction of Troy. In a description that spans over 50 lines, Virgil places the reader/listener in the position of Aeneas as he is confronted with images of past events.[157] Alessandro Barchiesi has pointed out that Virgil, more than any other poet, effectively deploys ekphrasis by depending on the "viewing subject."[158] In other words, Aeneas himself directs our "viewing" experience as we encounter the murals through his eyes. We are guided by the emotional temperament of Aeneas, as well as the hero's interpretation of what he sees, which in

[157] Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, 1. 619–675.
[158] Alessandro Barchiesi, "Virgilian Narrative: Ecphrasis," *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, Ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press 1997): 271-281.

turn conditions our response to the ekphrasis.

Apollonio takes great care in translating this imagined mural or "word painting" into his own works (he also represents it in the New Haven panels and at least seven times in the manuscript), though he must make certain alterations. (Fig. 2.11) Ekphrasis in a poetic context operates without rigid physical parameters, but the artist here does not have the luxury of space required to render the described murals in full. In other words, anything a poet imagines can be included in a written description of a work of art, regardless of whether it would be possible in reality to fit it all upon a two-dimensional surface. Apollonio resolves this dilemma by choosing just a few key moments from the narrative, leaving to the viewer of the cassone panels the task of imagining the others that complete the sequence in Virgil's ekphrasis. The episodes he depicts most often are rather consistent: the wooden horse that leads to Troy's downfall, the death of Priam's youngest son Troilus, and the corpse of Hector as he is dragged around the city walls by Achilles, which we see in the Hannover panel. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, we find that Apollonio has added an element from Homer's version of events in the *Iliad* to clarify for the viewer which scene is being portrayed. To the left of Hector's body is a knot of figures on horseback that witness Achilles' act of impiety. Their long hair and helmeted heads identify the women as the Amazons who joined the battle after Hector's death. The temple's prominent placement on the right side of the panel ensures that the ekphrasis will catch the viewer's eye just before it settles into the banquet scene on the left side of the pendant panel. This serves to put viewers in mind of the events of the Trojan War that Aeneas will shortly relate at the banquet.

2.3 Visual Adaptations of Aeneas for Florentine Audiences

Apollonio's proclivity for depicting events from ancient texts as though they were taking place in settings and conditions that evoked aspects of contemporary Florentine society was one

reason why his works were in such great demand with the city's wealthiest citizens. The term "actualization" can here be productively applied to describe Apollonio's choice to render scenes from an ancient poem as though they might have taken place in Florence itself.[159] In this sense of the word, actualization encompasses the practice of updating and appropriating familiar mythological content, effectively re-activating or re-deploying the subject matter so as to relate more effectively to the Florentine viewer. Thus, the Hannover panels present many instances in which the artist has imitated the real, contemporary world as Apollonio and his patrons encountered and inhabited it.

Aeneas, then, likely at the request of the patron, is visually characterized as a distant ancestor of Florentine citizens, albeit one whose clothing choices reference his Eastern heritage. (Fig. 2.12) The desire for depictions of Aeneas by the elite was in part due to the popular notion that they were descendants of the Trojans, who were considered by many to have been the first settlers of Italy. Already in 1403, the humanist and future Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni refers to this connection in his *Panegyric to the City of Florence*. His work traces the origins of the Florentines directly to the Roman ancestors credited with establishing the Roman republic, from which the city of Florence had inherited its own republican tradition.[160] In the Hannover panels, Aeneas wears a turban and a long, ornately decorated robe that nearly touches the tops of his tall boots. The artist's inspiration for the clothing worn by the Trojans likely came from observing the clothing of Emperor John Palaeologus VIII of Constantinople and his large retinue, whose official sojourn in the city of Florence during Apollonio's earlier years as an artist was

[159] Aristotle, George Whalley, John Baxter, and Patrick Atherton, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Montreal Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); see especially Aristotle's general introduction and sections 2-3.
[160] Leonardo Bruni, "Panegyric to the City of Florence," in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, eds. Ronald G. Witt, Elizabeth B. Welles, and Benjamin G. Kohl, trans. Benjamin G. Kohl (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 151.

cause for public celebration.[161] (Fig. 2.13) Dido's clothing in both sets of cassone panels was likewise inspired by the fashion of Byzantium, and upon her head rests a domed hat that extends forward at the brim. The emperor sports a version of this style in Pisanello's portrait medal of 1438.

Even more familiar to Florentines would have been the costumes worn by the guests attending the banquet (Fig. 2.14). Atop some female heads can be spotted the fashionable double-peaked hennin—a style imported from France and very popular in Florence at the time the panel was painted. The artist has carefully detailed the fabrics to mimic the rich brocades of contemporary dress. Florentines certainly had an appreciation for fine cloth, as the rich textiles produced in the city represented a significant portion of its citizens' wealth. Apollonio has also populated the space with scores of young men who wear the short tunics over colorful leggings then in vogue.

Indeed, Giovanni Rucellai documented the sartorial finery of Florence's citizenry in his *zibaldone*, a diary in which was compiled everything from his thoughts on artists or city architecture, to excerpts from the writings of his contemporaries, like Alberti, and finally, his own musings on morality. In an entry from 1457, the same decade in which Apollonio painted the Hannover panels, the wealthy merchant marvels, "Never before have men and women dressed in such expensive and elegant clothing. Women wear brocade and embroidered gowns covered with jewels and saunter through the streets in their French-style hats that cost at least two hundred florins apiece."[162] The banquet depicted is a particularly sumptuous affair, with musicians serenading the guests of honor, as was the custom at contemporary Florentine

[161] Virgil *Opera: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis; Manoscritto 492 della Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze*, ed. Bigiarelli B. Maracchi, (Firenze, Italy: Riproduzione Mycron, 1969), 114-115.
[162] Giovanni Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, ed. Gabriella Battista (Firenze: SISMEL, 2013), 181; English translation from Stefano U. Baldassarri and Arielle Saiber, *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History, and Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 73-74.

banqueting events. Dido and Aeneas sit before a thick blue tapestry embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis. A giant display of ornate dishes elaborately arranged on a *credenza*, another common sight at Florentine feasts of the Quattrocento, serves to divide the banquet from the hunting scene that sprawls across the right side of the panel. The luxurious gifts Aeneas earlier directed his men to retrieve from the ships are paraded into the midst of the diners and presented to Dido with great flourish by young, well-dressed boys. Rucellai goes on to note in his Zibaldone the sumptuousness with which marriages and other special occasions were celebrated, remarking, "The citizens have never had so much wealth, merchandise, and property, nor have the Monte's interests ever been so conspicuous; consequently, the sums spent on weddings, tournaments, and various forms of entertainment are greater than ever before."[163]

As if to underscore this very point with the viewer of the *cassoni*, Apollonio has painted an impressive audience for the events unfolding in their midst. Leaning out of the windows of the palace are spectators who marvel at the festivities taking place below and contribute to the impression that the happenings are part of a theatrical performance. Apollonio has here depicted the moment just before Aeneas begins his oral account of the destruction of Troy to a rapt audience of both banquet attendees and a formidable statue gallery of illustrious men, elegantly arranged in the large niches that flank the main table. The recessed sculptures echo the arrangement of Andrea del Castagno's contemporaneous fresco of famous worthies in the countryside villa of Cardinal Carducci, and in both cases, they appear poised to step from their frames. In the Hannover panel especially, the sculptures strain forward, as if jostling for a more ideal position from which to hear the tale Aeneas is about to convey.

The case of the Aeneid panels exemplifies just how formal, artistic concerns can be

[163] Giovanni Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, ed. Gabriella Battista, 182; English translation from Baldassarri and Saiber, *Images of Quattrocento Florence*, 74.

plumbed in order to understand various modes in which subject matter can inform viewer reception—in this case, the visual representation of a mythological narrative of heroic action. Placing the events of Virgil's poem in a setting familiar to Florentine sensibilities was a strategy Apollonio employed in order to help viewers relate more intimately with the Trojan hero's adventures. By choosing certain scenes from the poem and refraining from depicting others, the artist creates a particular interpretation of Virgil's work. Apollonio presents the Aeneas of Petrarch and Landino, a hero considered to be adorned with every virtue, as behaving both virtuously and not-so-virtuously. In keeping with the *cassone* tradition, he has provided both husband and wife with models to follow and examples to avoid. As the visual evidence attests, he embraces certain poetic devices for the Hannover panels that Virgil used in his epic, but alters them to meet the demands of visualization and of his patron.

2.4 The Proliferation of Aeneas in the Visual Culture of Florence

It was in the third decade of the fifteenth century, approximately twenty years before the Pollaiuolo brothers and Bertoldo di Giovanni began regularly producing works of art that took classical and mythological heroes as their subject, that the honoree of Ugolino Verino's effusive epigram revealed his talent for creating intricately worked paintings that featured scenes from ancient epic poetry. In the earliest years of his workshop, Apollonio tried his hand at rendering the fraught voyage back to Ithaca in Homer's *Odyssey*, but as is evidenced by the numerous extant panels and the luxuriously illustrated manuscript now in the Biblioteca Riccardiana, the Florentine artist's sustained interest was in depicting the hero of the *Aeneid* in the many adventures that preceded the mythical founding of Rome. This indicates that there was a large popular demand for the subject, given that artists like Apollonio worked on commission.

Ernst Gombrich has argued convincingly that Ugolino Verino's epigram provides

evidence that Apollonio must also be credited with creating the first monumental work in painting of a mythological subject.[164] Gombrich maintains that Verino refers to a now lost continuous narrative, or *tabula picta*, featuring seven scenes, including "the funeral of unhappy Dido."[165] That the known panels attributed to Apollonio and his workshop today do not contain this dramatic scene indicated to Gombrich that the poet was describing another larger work the humanist poet must have seen. The date for this lost work is not known, but Gombrich deduced that the artist would have finished work on it before Verino put the final touches on his *Fiammetta* in 1464.[166]

At least one *cassone* panel and two *testate*, or end panels, of Apollonio's, upon which he portrayed the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia and Trojan ships, respectively, have disappeared from public view. The panel depicting the wedding procession of Aeneas and Lavinia, a subject made popular by Maffeo Vegio in his so-called thirteenth book of the *Aeneid*, is listed as the "property of a gentleman" in a Christie's sales record from June of 1923.[167] The first of the two end panels was formerly in Perugia, in the collection van Marle, while the second has a longer provenance, but its final appearance in sales records is in November of 1938, in Berlin.[168] Whether they were lost during the Second World War or simply remain in undocumented private collections is uncertain. The first of the lost panels closely resembles the work of Apollonio now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston as noted by Ellen Callmann, who includes a reproduction of the work in her catalogue raisonné. In the most sumptuous sets of panels previously mentioned, Aeneas' encounter with Dido is an important theme, along with the dramatic events that occur

[164] Gombrich 17.
[165] Gombrich 17.
[166] Gombrich 21.
[167] Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, 69; see catalogue entry 37 for a description of the panel and plate 177 for a black-and-white reproduction.
[168] Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, 70; see catalogue entries 39 and 40 for descriptions of the panels and plates 183 and 182 for black-and-white reproductions.

before and after his arrival in Carthage.

The Riccardiana Virgil is a compilation volume that contains the first six books of the *Aeneid*, preceded by Virgil's *Georgics* and *Bucolics*. The manuscript features an impressive eighty-six framed vignettes that accompany the first three books of the *Aeneid*, and two additional illustrations that serve as frontispieces for each of Virgil's other two poems.[169] While the patron of this volume is unknown, it is generally accepted that the work was likely commissioned by a member of Cosimo de' Medici's circle of close friends and relatives.[170] Had it been completed to the specifications intended, it would have rivaled in sumptuousness the illustrated two-volume Bible made for Borso d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, between 1455 and 1462.

Each of Apollonio's illustrations is positioned at the bottom of the page, where the scribe left ample space for the colorful depictions. As with the *cassone* paintings, the artist has included the names of figures to help the reader identify the individuals populating each scene. This important aid ensured that his visual adaptation would be immediately legible to the reader—a particularly helpful feature when less familiar characters are included in the frame. The subject matter of each illustration corresponds in every case to the narrative action of the poem as written directly above it. Without the constraints imposed by the surface of a *cassone* panel, which requires the artist to choose only a limited number of scenes for depiction, Apollonio is here able to include a remarkable degree of detail in his efforts to reflect the spirit of the verses as they unfold.

A telling example of how closely the accompanying image might parallel the lines of verse can be found in the description of the first meal shared by the exhausted Trojans after

[169] Gombrich 19-20; Callmann 7.
[170] Dale V. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 226.

reaching Libyan shores. Virgil writes, "Now the Trojan crews made ready for their windfall and their feast. They skinned the deer, bared ribs and viscera, then one lot sliced the flesh and skewered it on spits, all quivering, while others filled bronze cooking pots and tended the beach fires. All got their strength back from the meal, reclining on the wild grass, gorging on venison and mellowed wine."[171] In the artist's illustration of the scene, it is possible to observe each of these activities occurring simultaneously. (Fig. 2.15) Two men chop wood for the fires near the tree line while another stirs an enormous pot in which the dismembered legs and other edible bits of deer are being boiled. One fellow has just sliced open a stag, whose ribs are indeed showing in this phase of the preparation. As the spitted meat roasts, the reader sees that Aeneas is already enjoying the respite offered by the soft grass, food, and wine in the company of his lounging companions. Down to the smallest detail, Apollonio has created a dramatic adaptation that charmingly enlivens what might otherwise seem a mundane list of activities.

Scholars have yet to reach a consensus as to why the illustrations were not completed beyond book three. The least convincing, yet most often rehearsed, theory is that the advent of the printing press in Italy led the patron who commissioned the work to prematurely put an end to the project, due to the sudden availability of less expensive editions. This supposition is flawed because Niccolò d'Antonio de' Ricci had already finished copying out the texts for the volume; thus, there could have been no compelling reason for a patron to suddenly change his mind in favor of a printed book that contained presumably the same content. Many of the early print volumes were illuminated after they had been printed, indicating that the demand for hand-painted illustrations continued.[172] Moreover, decorated manuscripts were produced for decades after the printing press revolutionized the book industry simply because they were luxury objects

[171] Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, I. 286-294.
[172] Lilian Armstrong, "The Hand-Illumination of Printed Books in Italy 1465-1515," in *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450-1550*, Ed. J. J. G. Alexander (Munich: Prestel, 1994), 35-47.

coveted by the wealthy elite, who were in search of ways to distinguish themselves from the growing middle class.

Another explanation that has recently gained some traction is that money flow for the project must have dried up as a result of the patron's changing economic fortunes. This is not implausible when one considers the vicissitudes of financing an illuminated manuscript at this time. Miniaturists and illuminators were paid for their work by the page, with existing contracts indicating that work was done in stages. For an artist to receive the amount agreed upon after a phase was completed, the quality of work needed to remain consistent and had to be finished within the amount of time designated.[173] Thus, Apollonio would likely have already been compensated for the work that was completed, unfinished though the manuscript remained.

Perhaps the most compelling theory for its unfinished state, and the one that many scholars embrace, is that work on the manuscript ended abruptly with Apollonio's death. One wonders, however, why another artist in the workshop would not simply have picked up where the previous artist left off, especially because the commission was no doubt a lucrative one. Manuscripts were, after all, quite often created with the help of numerous hands, so it would not have been an uncommon occurrence for another artist to finish the illustrations. It is possible, though, that the patron himself felt as strongly about Apollonio's special talent for depicting Aeneas as Ugolino Verino did. After all, if Apollonio was publically lauded as the artist "who painted Troy better"[174] than even Homer and Virgil, as Verino proclaimed, then the patron may not have desired that the project be completed by a lesser artist of the workshop.

I propose a new theory that takes into consideration the educational imperatives of the period. It seems reasonable to surmise that either the patron or the intended recipient of the

[173] J.J. G. Alexander, *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450-1550* (Munich: Prestel, 1994), 18-19.
[174] Gombrich 17.

manuscript died while Apollonio and his workshop were still carrying out the terms of the contract. Wealthy fathers sometimes commissioned illustrations for their school-aged sons' books to serve as study aids. Because Virgil's works were such an important component in the humanist curriculum from the time a student entered grade school to the time they completed their studies, it is very possible that the Riccardiana Virgil was meant to serve in this capacity. If the book had been intended for a young student, the lavish illustrations would have been unnecessary in the event of the intended recipient's death. As with the other proffered explanations, evidence directly supporting this conjecture is not available, though the close adherence of the pictorial content to the poem suggests that the illuminations were meant to aid memorization efforts. Whatever the circumstances may have been, the manuscript in its current state remains one of the most useful visual sources for the study of Aeneas' reception by Florentine viewers.

Although the patrons of Apollonio's works are unknown, a list of clients that purchased *cassone* panels from Apollonio's workshop has survived.[175] The list rarely includes descriptions of the subjects that were requested, which makes it impossible to know with any certainty to whom a surviving panel belonged, but it does indicate that many established Florentine families, including the Capponi, Strozzi, Sassetti, Albizzi, and Medici, turned to Apollonio for their nuptial furniture. What appears to be either the Nasi or Pollini arms can be seen emblazoned on the ships of the Hannover panel, and indeed, there are a few entries in the *bottega* book that indicate that members of the Nasi family were patrons of the shop.[176] The prices, in florins, for each commission are also listed in this document. It can be assumed that both sets of *cassone*

[175] See appendix I "The *Bottega* Book," MS Magliabechiano, XXXVII, 305, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence, Italy, transcribed by Gino Corti in Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, 76-81.
[176] See Callmann, Apollonio di Giovanni, Cat. 35, 68. She explains that the ladder and shield together form the Pollini arms, while the shield alone comprises the Nasi arms.

panels, along with the Riccardiana Virgil, would likely have commanded high prices since they were done mostly by Apollonio himself rather than by workshop assistants. The average price of a set of panels made in Apollonio's shop is around 33 florins, with prices as high as 52 and 55 florins.

Most known representations of Aeneas produced in Florence during the fifteenth century can be attributed to Apollonio and his workshop, but a number of other examples by Florentine artists exist. The so-called *Florentine Picture-Chronicle*, now attributed to Baccio Baldini and his workshop, includes a full-length portrait of Virgil's hero standing alongside the King of Latium and Turnus, two important characters from the second half of the *Aeneid*. (Fig. 2.16) In addition, the artist has included a drawing of Aeneas with an unlabeled Ascanius and Creusa standing next to a ship while the conflagration of Troy can be witnessed in the background. (Fig. 2.17) The British Museum hesitantly supports Colvin's identification of the unlabeled female figure in the group as Dido, but the assignation does not stand up to scrutiny.[177] In another drawing from the same volume, Dido is clearly labeled in front of her city of Carthage. (Fig. 2.18) The costume she wears is markedly different in style from the female figure I believe should be identified as Aeneas' second wife, Lavinia. On her head, Dido wears an ornate crown more in keeping with the Florentine notion of how a North African queen might have dressed, while Lavinia wears a two-coned hennin, similar to women depicted in Apollonio di Giovanni's manuscript and panels, and a style then in vogue for the elite women of Florence. These sartorial distinctions are in keeping with the artistic inclination of the time to employ dress as a visual signifier of cultural origin and difference.

Mariano del Buono, an artist associated with Vespasiano's successful Florentine

[177] Sidney Colvin, *A Florentine Picture-Chronicle: Being a Series of Ninety-Nine Drawings Representing Scenes and Personages of Ancient History, Sacred and Profane* (New York: B. Blom, 1970).

manuscript workshop, also worked on Virgilian imagery for Francesco Sassetti, who commissioned not one, but two copies, of the *Aeneid* at approximately the same time.[178] The illuminated frontispiece for the larger volume of the pair is inscribed within a whimsical border that recalls the white vine scrolling of early manuscript illumination. (Fig. 2.19) Strategically scattered throughout are small medallions that contain depictions of the events that preceded the fall of Troy.[179] In the upper-middle vignette, the three competing goddesses await Paris' judgment while Helen is dragged away from her home in the right corner. Below, Greek ships wend their way to the ill-fated Trojan city. Interspersed among these scenes are simulated gems, numerous cameos depicting Virgil, Aeneas, and Dido, and gamboling putti who hold the escutcheon of the Sassetti. The largest scene is a window onto the unlucky, unsuspecting Trojans who gamely lead the giant wooden horse toward their city looming beyond. These depictions attest to the Florentine sense that the events of the *Aeneid* were situated within a much longer historical narrative. (Fig. 2.20) Thus, Francesco Sassetti must first venture through the frame of Homer's *Iliad* before he is able to gain access to Aeneas' journey to Italian shores.

Paolo Uccello's contribution to subjects taken from the *Aeneid* is a single *cassone* panel now in the Seattle Art Museum that depicts episodes from the second half of the poem. (Fig. 2.21) A pitched battle between Trojan soldiers, led by the Amazon warrior Camilla, and the Rutulians headed by Turnus, unfolds on the right side of the panel, while a richly attired procession welcomes Aeneas to the shores of Latium on the left. The artist's unique style and attention to detail can be noted in the prancing horses, the dramatically crossed lances, as well as the use of foreshortening, color, and perspective to deepen the space.

---

[178] Laur. 39.6, Virgil, *Aeneid*; See Albinia de la Mare, "The Library of Francesco Sassetti," *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Manchester Eng., Manchester University Press, 1976): 169; see description of decoration in entry # 23, pg. 179.
[179] Mariano del Buono*,* frontispiece for *Virgilio,* Ms Plut. 39.6, in Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy.

A puzzling panel at first glance, the contribution to this milieu of Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, more commonly known as Lo Scheggia, is in the collection of the Musée National de la Renaissance in Écouen, France. (Fig. 2.22) The subject comes not from Virgil's poem, but from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Le Roman de Troie*, a twelfth-century reworking of the poem that casts the Greeks in a considerably more favorable light—and Aeneas in a villainous light—than does Virgil. It depicts Aeneas as he attempts to end the siege of the Greeks upon the city of Troy by treacherously agreeing to return Helen to Menelaus. This scene of betrayal marks the only known panel produced in Florentine workshops that casts Aeneas as a traitor, which suggests the great degree to which Virgil's epic was favored over the French interpretation by the fifteenth century.

2.5 Reading Aeneas

To apprehend how viewers responded to such visualizations of Aeneas, and understand just why they came to revere him as a moral hero, it is important to consider a number of related developments that together provide a framework for mapping viewer expectations in the Quattrocento. Petrarch's long-held views regarding the nature of poetry were influential in the later development of the humanist understanding of Aeneas. In a letter to his brother Gherardo, who served as a Carthusian monk, Petrarch emphatically maintains, "…allegory is the very warp and woof of all poetry."[180] He believed, as had other poets, scholars and theologians before him, that deeper truths resided underneath the written words and narrative action of a poem.

For Petrarch, these veiled meanings were the fabric of poetry, rather than the ornament, as gleaned from his choice of metaphor. According to this conception, the reader's obligation is to scrupulously excavate the profound underpinnings of each verse in order to bring to light the

[180] Francesco Petrarca, James H. Robinson, and Henry W. Rolfe, *Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters: A Selection from His Correspondence with Boccaccio and Other Friends, Designed to Illustrate the Beginnings of the Renaissance* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 262, *Fam*., x., 4.

hidden truths embedded by the poet for moral edification. Petrarch further argues in this missive that theology is closely related to poetry, because scripture and the patriarchs of the Old Testament routinely relied on allegorical constructions, particularly in those books that were categorized as "heroic song."[181] The wreathing of classical poetry with Christian ideals was a common strategy employed by early Florentine humanists in order to combat frequent accusations that indulging the mind in such pagan works led to immorality and encouraged vice.[182]

The Renaissance understanding of Aeneas as the pious founder of Rome and *primo progenitore* of the Roman people was securely rooted in the sophisticated allegorical readings of the epic proffered by leading Florentine humanists like Cristoforo Landino, each following in Petrarch's exegetical footsteps regarding the truth to be discovered within the *Aeneid*. In fact, Landino later echoes Petrarch's sentiments in his commentary on the *Aeneid* when he writes, "It was indeed an excellent discovery . . . that not only poets but others who are writing some major work should conceal it with varied fictions and veils of figures. For they thought it would come about that if they rendered the matter more difficult, not only would things they had written take on greater dignity and authority, but also those who heard them (because they would not fully attain them without labor and industry) would make more of them . . ."[183] What is interesting in this reformulation of Petrarch's understanding of poetry is Landino's added emphasis on the labor that is required to properly excavate gems of meaning from the surface of poetic constructions. Those readers who arrive at such truths through "labor and industry" are thus more prepared to embrace the wisdom contained within, allowing it to infuse and transform their

[181] Petrarca et al. 263-264.
[182] David Robey, "Humanist Views on the Study of Poetry in the Early Italian Renaissance," *History of Education* 13.1 (1984): 8–9.
[183] Thomas H. Stahel and Cristoforo Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*: Books III and IV of the *Camaldolese Disputations,*" Ph.D. Dissertation (Johns Hopkins University, 1968), 44-45.

own natures, than those who lazily delight in easily grasped meanings that lie at the surface.

That the Florentine elite boasted a particularly intimate knowledge of the Roman epic can to a great extent be attributed to the scholarly efforts of Landino, who held a professorship of rhetoric and poetry at the city's university from 1457 to 1497.[184] His publication record reveals an abiding interest in the hero Aeneas, whom he considered to be an exemplary figure, worthy of emulation by all—a sentiment that was in keeping with Petrarch's earlier understanding of Virgil's epic. According to Landino, "Virgil's poem portrays every kind of human life, so that there is no class, age, sex, or, finally, no condition which could not learn from it the entirety of its duties."[185] He disseminated these ideas in a series of university lectures on the *Aeneid* during the 1462-63 academic year, then further developed their significance from a philosophical perspective in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, of 1480.[186] Landino's dense commentary on the epic, published in 1488, was frequently included in volumes containing Virgil's works.[187]

Two important humanist impulses were closely related in the early Renaissance, and, when considered together, they provide a productive space within which to examine why works of art featuring Aeneas experienced resurgence at this time and just how the expected viewer response might have been shaped or conditioned by humanist concerns. The first vein of humanism, characterized by the renewed interest and search for classical texts and the imitation of ancient writers and their works, prompted the development of a sophisticated new education program that privileged the study of the liberal arts and eventually replaced the scholastic curriculum known as *ars dictaminis*, which focused mostly on Latin grammar, Christian

[184] Kallendorf, "Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid*," 519.
[185] Kallendorf, "Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid,*" 525–526.
[186] Kallendorf, "Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid*," 520.
[187] Kallendorf, "Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid*," 521.

morality, and letter writing.[188] The *studia humanitatis*, which emphasized the utility of possessing a thorough understanding of ancient poets—Virgil in particular—became the preferred method of educating members of the wealthy merchant and elite classes.[189] Two goals of this type of education were for students to gain a working knowledge of the finer points of rhetoric and to then be able to employ phrases and entire sections of ancient prose and poetry in their own Latin constructions for whatever rhetorical purpose might arise.

The second vein of humanism, which Hans Baron dubbed civic humanism in the mid-twentieth century, has been characterized by modern scholars as the application of humanist principles to the governance of the city by individuals who were educated in this new curriculum.[190] In Florence, young men who had received this new type of education were expected to participate in institutional politics when they came of age.[191] Their charge, according to this ideology, was to apply a keenly developed knowledge of Latin grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy to the governance of the republic.

Contemporary scholars as early as Petrarch referred to these related emphases within humanism as supporting either the *vita contemplativa* or the *vita activa*. As with painting and poetry, the contemplative and active lives were often placed in opposition to one another to determine which life resulted in the greater degree of happiness and personal satisfaction for the individual, and which merited the most praise from others. As the debate evolved, those who participated in this discourse were likely to laud aspects of both lives and therefore recommended a balance be maintained between the two. While Petrarch and the younger

---

[188] John Monfasani, *Language and Learning in Renaissance Italy: Selected Articles* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Variorum, 1994), I, 171.; Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 117-120.
[189] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 110.
[190] Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny,* Rev. 1 vol. ed. with an epilogue (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), 4-7
[191] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy,* 117-121.

Boccaccio generally exhorted the contemplative life, Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of Florence from 1375 until his death in 1406, vacillated between the two poles. While in some of his writings, he presents himself as an avid proponent of the active, engaged life, maintaining its superiority to a life of solitary contemplation, in others, he seems to favor the benefits of the contemplative life over civic duty.[192]

2.6 Realizing the Summum Bonum: Education and the Cultivation of Virtue

Cristoforo Landino directly connected Aeneas to this discourse in both his public lectures and lengthy commentary on the *Aeneid*. Virgil's hero is presented in this allegorizing view as an ideal leader whose choices and myriad trials encountered from the time of the great Trojan exile to the founding of Rome exemplify the elevation of the soul from sensual pleasures to civic engagement and finally, to embracing the highest virtue—that of the contemplative life.[193] For Landino, it is important to recognize and attend to all three modes of life in order to eventually arrive at the final destination, wherein the *summum bonum* is finally achieved. In youth, for instance, the humanist explains that inherent, natural vice troubles the soul, though with proper guidance virtue can be nurtured to replace vice. This he believed to be symbolized by Aeneas' journey from Troy to Carthage, during which time he received constant aid and encouragement from his mother, Venus.

He goes on to explain that in the mature years of life, civic duty is an important charge for those who are called to leadership, benefitting the person who embraces this weighty responsibility as well as those he serves. In this stage, one is able to properly hone one's virtue, so as to be prepared to move on to the next plane of life. The active life, then, is allegorically

[192] Robey, "Humanist Views," 13; Baron, *Crisis of the Early Renaissance*, 106-118.
[193] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 237; See Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*," 55, 134, 182-184, for Landino's allegory of Aeneas' journey, and his eventual realization of the *summum bonum* upon arriving in Italy.

defined as the period of time Aeneas spends in Carthage with Dido, whose prowess as a female leader does much to help the hero develop his own skills through emulation. Finally, after having served well for a time, it is important to depart the comfortable shores of civic governance in order to make one's way to the place where the soul can be prepared to contemplate divine knowledge with no more distractions. Vice has entirely been replaced with virtue, Landino proffers, when Aeneas finally arrives on the shores of Italy. There, his journey into the underworld symbolizes his desire to understand the vices that plague humanity, which the hero is able to accomplish because they no longer have a hold on his own nature. Following this excursion, Aeneas' entry into the Elysian Fields represents the soul's final transformation into a vessel perfectly able to contemplate truth and things of a divine nature.[194] Landino explains that Virgil "regarded the *summum bonum* as residing in the knowledge of the divine; nevertheless, because he thought that a man who was to be happy should excel in every kind of virtue, he shows that a beginning must be made with those [virtues] having to do with life and mores. . . . we come to recognize vices, abominate them once they are recognized; and when we are thus rendered pure, we can pass over to the celestial and the immortal."[195] This is why the poet "took care to fashion Aeneas in such a way that he could first teach [Aeneas] about all the vices and then lead him to the Elysian Fields after he had been cleansed of them."[196] Landino here emphasizes the crucial role Virgil, and by extension, poetry, play in the moral education of an individual. Just as the Roman poet fashions the heroic Aeneas so that he can serve as an exemplar for others, so too can poetry, when properly taught by a learned educator, help to fashion young students into virtuous citizens.

Humanist discourse provided the context within which the merits of individual virtues

[194] Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*, 253.
[195] Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*, 254.
[196] Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*, 254.

could be debated, clarified, and taught. Students were encouraged to model themselves after literary and historical figures known for their virtue, a technique related to the imitation of ancient rhetoricians and writers.[197] Pietro Paolo Vergerio expounded upon the importance of this practice for cultivating inner virtue, particularly for children who were not yet able to reason for themselves, in a widely circulated treatise on the importance of liberal arts in the education of young people.[198] Aeneas was frequently utilized in this context, as he had been deemed an ideal hero with unsurpassed virtue, and thus, worthy to serve as a model for others. In another educational treatise written in 1459, Battista Guarino emphasized the crucial necessity for students to memorize all of Virgil's poetry.[199] This would certainly have included the *Aeneid*, and one might understandably wonder how it was possible for students to meet this seemingly impossible objective, particularly because they were expected to know the works of other writers by memory as well. One scholar concludes based upon his extensive examination of pedagogical texts and practices that every student was responsible for learning an important author from each of four categories, with Virgil being taught thoroughly as the exemplum of poetic expression in most cases.[200] One of Apollonio's wealthiest customers, Piero de' Pazzi, was reputedly able to recite the entire *Aeneid* from memory.[201]

While the memorization and recitation of poetry were intended to help students better understand the role of eloquence in the way ancient writers used Latin, poetry was also studied for its linguistic and etymological value in the classroom, with the origins of significant words and place references explicated to provide another level of understanding. In his lectures, for

---

[197] Maryanne C. Horowitz, *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998), 96.
[198] Pietro Paolo Vergerio, "Concerning Liberal Studies," *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook*, Ed. Kenneth R. Bartlett (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy,* 117.
[199] Battista Guarino, "On the Means of Teaching and Learning," *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance,* 193.
[200] Grendler*, Schooling in Renaissance Italy,* 204-205.
[201] Jerzy Miziolek, "The *Odyssey* Cassone Panels from the Lanckoroński Collection: On the Origins of Depicting Homer's Epic in the Art of the Italian Renaissance," *Artibus et Historiae* 27.53 (2006): 61.

instance, Landino provided an etymological exegesis of the hero's name. According to this scholar, the word Aeneas came from the Greek word "ainos," which was related to the Latin word for praise, or "laus."[202] This, he concluded, was why the epic could be considered an epideictic, or laudatory, poem, and confirmed that Virgil's intention was to provide his readers with a hero who possessed every virtue.[203] Two other ways to approach the study of poetry are, as Landino tells us in his commentary on the *Aeneid*, to explicate content that could be considered historical, and to reconcile phrases that appear on the surface to be contradictory through analogy.[204] The most morally beneficial approach, he believes, unsurprisingly, to be through allegorical exegesis, which serves both the mind and the soul.[205]

The study and viewing of exemplary subjects was not, however, a phenomenon limited to educating children and students attending university. Leonardo Bruni, in a letter to Battista Malatesta, stresses the importance and value of reading Virgil, stating that knowledge of this poet's works was the hallmark of an educated person. Bruni further advises Battista on how to respond when others register their disapproval of her studies in ancient poetry. Using perhaps the most contentious scene from the epic by way of example, he states, "When I read the loves of Aeneas and Dido in the *Aeneid* I pay my tribute of admiration to the genius of the poet, but the matter itself I know to be a fiction, and thus it leaves no moral impression and so in other instances of the kind, where literal truth is not the object aimed at. The Scriptures, on the other hand, whose literal accuracy no one questions, do not seldom cause me misgivings."[206] He argues elsewhere that there are many episodes in the Bible that could be considered lewd and shameful,

---

[202] Craig Kallendorf, *The Virgilian Tradition: Book History and the History of Reading in Early Modern Europe* (England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2007), 137.
[203] Brian Vickers, "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance," *New Literary History*. 14.3 (1983): 506.
[204] Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*, 53-54.
[205] Stahel and Landino, "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the *Aeneid*, 54.
[206] Leonardo Bruni, "A Letter to Battista Malatesta on the Study of Literature," in *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance,* 186-189.

and yet the Bible is not prohibited reading material. For this reason, he urges Battista to glean what she can from Virgil, as epic poets often offered advice relevant to daily affairs.

2.7 Exemplary Viewing

The Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini, in his *De vera nobilitate*, praised the impressive benefits of exemplary viewing when he proclaimed that great men of the ancient world also subscribed to this practice. Because they made it a habit to surround themselves with portraits of virtuous men, they too strove for intelligence and virtue, thus transforming themselves into models to be emulated by future generations. While the humanist schoolteacher Vergerio had spoken of the emulation of virtue as rooted in the study of figures from poetry and history, Poggio securely connects this practice to the study of images. In so doing, he sheds light on how visual models were employed by Renaissance audiences for the purpose of developing good character.[207] Images had, of course, long been considered to serve as important aids in the attainment of virtue, and Petrarch's gift of ancient Roman coins to Charles IV was meant to operate in this didactic fashion, as discussed in the previous chapter in greater detail.[208]

In his treatise on architecture, Leon Battista Alberti provides another perspective on the importance of exemplary imagery within the domestic sphere. He explains that pictures or sculptures in the dining rooms and porticoes of city abodes should visualize the great deeds carried out by citizens and "great princes," and subjects featuring memorable events should be given preference, particularly if the home belongs to an elite individual. Even more preferred than representations of extraordinary feats, Alberti recommends imagery that features "illustration of the tales that poets make for moral instruction, like that which Daedalus painted

[207] Poggio Bracciolini, "On Nobility," *Knowledge, Goodness, and Power: The Debate Over Nobility Among Quattrocento Italian Humanists*, ed. and trans. Albert Rabil (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 64-65.
[208] Kathleen Christian, *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, C. 1350-1527* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 33.

on the gates to the temple at Cumae, showing Icarus in flight."[209] The example he provides is tellingly from Virgil's *Aeneid*. As others have also noted, the scene Alberti points out is nowhere mentioned in Virgil's ekphrasis of the entry to the temple of the sibyl, though the poet does impart to his readers that Daedalus tried and failed—presumably because grief made it an impossible task—to produce the scene of his son's fall twice.[210]

The value Alberti places on commissioning images inspired by poets such as Virgil for the purpose of guiding the moral development of the domicile's patriarch, family, and visitors is illustrative of both the epideictic sheen the *Aeneid* was purported to have by humanists, as well as the benefits that came from having such scenes visualized on a large-scale for the same purpose. Though Alberti distinguishes between works depicting great achievements and works illustrating poems intended for moral instruction, both of these can be found to operate within the rich sphere of exemplarity that permeated the intellectual dimensions of humanism. In this way, they align with Poggio's opinion of this matter in his discussion of nobility.

Alberti also recommends such images for their presumed pro-creative benefits and advises couples to "only hang portraits of men of dignity and handsome appearance" in places where they might have marital relations because "they say that this may have a great influence on the fertility of the mother and the appearance of the future offspring."[211] This understanding of visual stimulus as having the capability of impressing itself upon the eye, thereby having a real, physical impact on one's offspring, was an inheritance from the ancient world and proliferated in advice manuals throughout the Renaissance.[212] According to this logic, viewing *cassoni* with

[209] Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 299.
[210] Alberti and Rykwert et al. 408, see footnote 57; Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, 6.47–50.
[211] Alberti and Rykwert et al. *On the Art of Building*, 299.
[212] Bell, Rudolph M., *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 39-40.

paintings of Aeneas' deeds in the marital chambers where they were displayed would result in the child being imprinted from birth with piety, virtue, and innate leadership for which the hero was famous.

2.8 Strategies for Visualizing Aeneas

When it came to Aeneas, who had secured a place in the Florentine collective imagination as the most virtuous of all pagan heroes, fifteenth-century artists needed to come up with appropriate strategies of visualization. By way of comparison, there existed numerous ancient representations on coins, gems and statuary of Hercules and Orpheus. These were collected by wealthy patrons and frequently made available for artists to draw and examine. Although a number of Roman emperors minted coins that depicted the famous episode wherein Aeneas carries his father and the palladium to safety, I believe it is unlikely that Florentine artists had seen any of these representations in the fifteenth century because none of the extant depictions of this particular scene follow the ancient scheme.

Illustrated copies of Virgil's epic persisted from the early fifth century, as evidenced by the *Vergilius Vaticanus* (Pre-428 CE) and the *Virgilius Romanus* (450 CE), but there is nothing to suggest that Apollonio had access to these illustrations. The *Vergilius Vaticanus*, a codex that originally held at least 280 illustrations of the *Aeneid* and other works by Virgil, now contains only 50, with 41 belonging to the *Aeneid*. There is evidence that in the early fifteenth century the volume was in the possession of a French humanist, who made notes of missing pages and provided fresh outlines of certain figures that had faded during the intervening centuries. By 1514, Marcantonio Raimondi had reinterpreted and adapted some elements of the illustrations for his engraving, *Il Morbetto*, while Marco Dente evidently modeled aspects of his Laocoon after the fifth century illustration. Pietro Bembo acquired the manuscript at some point during

this period, which is presumably how Raimondi and Dente would have been able to incorporate elements of it into their works. It became part of the Vatican collection in 1600, bequeathed by Fulvio Orsini upon his death and in whose possession it had been since he purchased it from Bembo's son in 1579.[213]

Relatively little opportunity for access to these early codices, along with a comparison of the imagery from the earlier *Virgilius Vaticanus* and *Vergilius Romanus* to the works of Quattrocento artists in Florence, suggest that Apollonio and fellow artists developed their own iconographies for Aeneas. Nevertheless, Florentine artists had a number of choices available to them with regard to just how this Virgilian hero might be visualized, as becomes clear when comparing their works to those produced in other areas of Italy and Europe. In many of these cases, visualizations of Christian allegory are depicted in a literal sense and are regularly employed throughout the imagery, particularly in scenes that focus on Aeneas' relationship with Dido and his descent into the underworld.[214] In this approach to Virgilian iconography, termed "gemina pictura" by Antonie Wlosok, both the surface meaning and the allegorical reading are present in the image. The effect is a sort of picture commentary that provides only a limited interpretation of the depiction, so that the viewer is only able to consider the image through a proffered allegorical frame.[215] (Fig. 2.23) In Florence, the preferred mode of representation was instead a reflection of the Florentine tendency to project contemporary interests and concerns

[213] David H. Wright, *The Vatican Vergil: A Masterpiece of Late Antique Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 109-115.
[214] Antonie Wlosok, "*Gemina Pictura:* Allegorisierende Aeneisillustrationen in Handschriften des 15. Jahrhunderts," *The Two Worlds of the Poet: New Perspectives on Vergil*, Ed. Alexander G. McKay, Robert M. Wilhelm, and Howard Jones (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 408-432; Antonie Wlosok, "Textkritische Marginalien und Allegorisierende Illustrationen im Vergilcodex 837 der Universitätsbibliothek in Valencia," *The Classical Tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Proceedings of the First European Science Foundation Workshop on "The Reception of Classical Texts,"* Eds. Claudio Leonardi and Olsen B. Munk (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1995), 75-110; Antonie Wlosok, "Illustrated Vergil Manuscripts: Reception and Exegesis," *The Classical Journal* 93.4 (1998): 355-382.
[215] Wlosok, "Gemina Pictura," 412.

onto the past, thereby effectively linking the city's present to its famous origins.

Apollonio provided his patrons with consciously ekphrastic depictions of Aeneas' journey. In other words, the artist adhered strictly to the literal meaning of Virgil's poem in designing his imagery, as opposed to painting allegorical readings of the narrative into the composition. This does not mean, however, that viewers were restricted to parsing the imagery only in a literal way; rather, with a broad humanist understanding of Virgil's epic, each was invited to bring his or her own knowledge and perspectives of the existing textual exegesis of the *Aeneid* to bear on the illustrations and paintings of Aeneas in action.[216] Audiences, then, could determine their own interpretive frame each time they gazed upon the large expanses of their painted nuptial chests, or opened the manuscript, as they wished. In this sense, representations of the hero retained a moral dimension for viewers and could provide examples of virtue, but the vignettes themselves eschewed visualizing allegorical modes and were instead rendered so as to facilitate various kinds of interpretations.

The ways in which scenes from the *Aeneid* were approached at this early date seems to have come from productive attempts to answer questions of the following sort: How might a translation of the virtuous hero known mostly from commentaries and poetry into a visual medium be most effectively accomplished? What should be retained, and what might be lost in this translation? The legibility of Aeneas could not depend on acts of brute strength and the resulting attributes distilled from such encounters as they could for heroes like Hercules. On the contrary, Virgil's protagonist was a man whose every action stemmed from careful thought and deliberation. Artists therefore developed a kind of visual shorthand that was heavily dependent upon his interaction with other characters and situations. By making use of visual narrative,

[216] Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 324-325.

then, artists were able to present his virtues in a way that was recognizable and conducive to discernment by individuals familiar with the text itself.

In this fashion, artists like Apollonio accomplished precisely what Landino had praised Virgil for doing in his creation and presentation of the hero, Aeneas, albeit in visual, rather than poetic, form. While philosophers could only speak of virtue, the Roman poet was able to show, through a series of actions, the intricate dimensions of ideal virtue and how it unfolded in time.[217] This poetic demonstration of placing virtue before the mind's eye was mirrored in *cassone* panels and other representations of Aeneas in the visual arts of Florence, where virtue could be depicted in paint, and was meant to aid in the moral development of the viewer. In his consideration of Renaissance readers' responses to this mythological hero, Timothy Hampton argues for the importance of understanding the name "Aeneas" as a sign, complete in itself, within which is embodied an entire sequence of virtuous actions that serves as an exemplar to the person who reads the text.[218] Taking this idea further, I believe it is constructive to think of a picture of Aeneas as the visual analogue to the written sign, within which is embodied not only virtuous action as it is visualized over the pages and panels for the eye, but also the many lines of the epic poem itself that a viewer/reader had memorized, as well as the popular humanist interpretations of the *Aeneid*. This potent combination of visual and textual signs would have been particularly meaningful for the educated viewer.

2.9 Visualizing Virtue – Aeneas Between Page and Panel

A number of themes come to the fore when examining the artistic representations of Aeneas' journey created in the fifteenth century. Each illuminates an aspect of Aeneas' personality that was considered by fifteenth-century audiences to contribute to his virtue, and

[217] Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990), 20.
[218] Hampton, *Writing from History,* 23-26.

thus, enhanced the hero's desirability in terms of emulative worth. Examining these themes also provides a way of understanding how Aeneas' virtue was conceptualized and understood visually.

One of the most prevalent ideas represented, and one that can be detected throughout the body of works that feature the hero Aeneas, is the concept of fame and its vicissitudes. This is in alignment with both Virgil's preoccupation with fame throughout the poem, as well as the contemporary cultural promotion of fame in Renaissance Florence. Artists approached the concept of Aeneas' fame in different ways, depending upon the function of the art object in question, at times in concert with the poet, though making exceptions for proper visual expressions. For instance, in the illustrated manuscript now in the Riccardiana, Apollonio provides a visual analogue to Virgil's exposition of the hero's famous reputation, taking a cue from Virgil, who himself employs a visual device, ekphrasis, to underscore the importance of Aeneas' fame. After landing on the Libyan shores, having been sent careening into the unfamiliar coast after the tempest Juno manufactured at sea threw them off course, Aeneas and his good friend Achates encounter Venus in disguise. After a time, the hero realizes he is, in fact, speaking with his mother, who encourages him to view the grand city of Carthage from a closer proximity and to seek the aid of its famous Queen. Virgil emphasizes her illustrious reputation by having Venus tell the story of Dido's life thus far, and how she came to be the ruler of such a productive city. Aeneas' reluctance to enter the city stems from his insecurity about whether the queen has already heard about his plight, fearing that if she has not yet heard what tragedy befell the people of Troy, she is not likely to be sympathetic to the lost sea-farers. In typical deity-like fashion, Venus insists on her wish and makes the two companions invisible so they can see first hand what the character and mood of the queen may be toward the new arrivals.

Aeneas and Achates enter the city, marveling all the while at the massive building initiatives in progress, and eventually find themselves facing the imposing temple of Juno. Virgil's protagonists are clearly taken aback by walls lavishly painted with scenes from the fall of Troy, as Aeneas remarks, "What spot on earth, / …. what region of the earth, Achatës, / is not full of the story of our sorrow? / Look, here is Priam. Even so far away / Great valor has due honor; they weep here / For how the world goes, and our life that passes / Touches their hearts. Throw off your fear. This fame / Insures some kind of refuge."[219] Likewise, Apollonio spends no little time indicating the importance of this revelation, and painstakingly represents the depictions gracing the temple in no less than seven framed illustrations, with one planned as a cutaway from the painted temple that can be appropriately characterized as a "close up" . The painter must amend Virgil's ekphrastic account of the content of the paintings in order to fit them within the allotted space. The scenes Apollonio chooses to include in his depiction of the temple are telling. The main image depicts Troilus thrown from Achilles' chariot, while the Trojan horse flanks this scene on the left and Hector's corpse as it is dragged behind Achilles' appears on the right. The cutaway on the next page depicts two scenes – the first is a more detailed version of Hector's demise at the hands of the Greek war hero, while in the upper right Apollonio illustrates Achilles giving the body of the dead prince back to his father, the Trojan King Priam. These three moments are miniaturizations of the most important scenes, as understood by the Florentines, of the Trojan War. Achilles was also a demi-god, while Hector conducted himself in a manner that indicated his right to the enormous fame he received even in death.

While Virgil goes on to list a number of other scenes, Apollonio's choices provide a glimpse into the continuing popularity of those scenes in particular. Both sets of *cassone* panels painted by the same artist and now in the Yale collection and the repositories of the

[219] Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, 1.624-631.

Niedersächsische Landesgalerie also depict these very scenes in the temple of Juno. Workshop practices would partly account for these similarities, because artists often made use of previous works produced in the shop and of pattern books, but cannot entirely explain why these particular scenes were selected. Virgil's ekphrasis of the temple wall includes at least five other pivotal and oft-represented episodes, a number of them dealing with the female heroes of the war.

Landino explained that Aeneas' journey to fulfill his destiny should be understood allegorically as one that originated in pleasure and ignorance as symbolized by Troy, then progressed through an enlightening period of active pursuits and endeavors of a civic nature in the young city of Carthage, before culminating in the attainment of perfect contemplation and understanding of higher truths in Italy.[220] Landino's perspective regarding the *summum bonum* thus leans toward the ultimate superiority of the contemplative life over the active, though he seems to suggest that it can only be reached after successfully engaging in active pursuits. Most humanists agreed that a balance of the two must be had to live an ideal life, which reflected the importance of civic service in the governance and maintenance of the republic. Those who held office contributed to the life and liberty of the city by upholding republican ideals while simultaneously cultivating their intellect for the purpose of applying these principles in their governmental positions.

Similar notions can be detected in the way Apollonio depicted Aeneas' virtue in the manuscript. Despite Virgil's consistent emphasis on the Trojan hero's active role in the war to defend Troy and secure the Italian shores, Aeneas is never shown by Apollonio to be actively participating in battle. He is instead characterized as a leader who relies on intellect to guide

[220] Craig Kallendorf, "Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid* and the Humanist Critical Tradition," *Renaissance Quarterly* 36.4 (1983): 520.

those who would fight for him. Even when presented in full battle armor, he is nowhere seen attacking his enemies with violence; rather, the gestures of his arms and the expression upon his face indicate that he values words above weapons even in times of disaster (Fig. 2.24). The only time his physical strength is brought to the fore in these illustrations is when Apollonio depicts the hero carrying his father out of the burning city. For this feat, Aeneas wears a protective lion skin, which is the usual attribute of Hercules (Fig. 2.25). Although small, this detail would have been especially meaningful to a citizen of Florence, since the republic had adopted Hercules as a symbol of their autonomous rule since the early thirteenth century. Renowned for his unearthly strength and often-violent encounters with the enemies of civilized society, Hercules' intervention in the visualization of Aeneas serves to highlight the important role heroic efforts played in establishing the Roman civilization.

While Apollonio's output indicates a focus on episodes from the first and very last books of the *Aeneid*, the single panel by Uccello that addresses the experiences of Aeneas takes its subject from a section that describes the battle between Turnus' army and the Trojans. (Fig. 2.21) Though the patron of the sumptuous *cassone* panel now in the Seattle Art Museum is not known, it is likely that Uccello received the commission because of his established reputation for depicting scenes of battle. The three panels owned by Lorenzo de' Medici feature Uccello's adroit handling of the battle of San Romano and were given pride of place in Lorenzo's bedroom chambers at the new Medici palazzo on Via Larga.[221] With horses rearing and lances wielded by heavily armored men, Uccello emphasizes the captains whose leadership turned the battle in Florence's favor.

In order to direct the viewer's attention to the heroic men amidst the chaotic melee, the

[221] Richard Stapleford, ed., trans., *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 25, 56, and for the translated record in the inventory, 71.

artist has adeptly muted the noisy clash of battle in the background by depicting the armies in full armor, with faces hidden behind protective helmets. As other scholars have pointed out, the clamoring soldiers astride their war coursers are so thickly clustered that it is difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other ends.[222] This calculated method of muting certain areas of the composition for the purpose of drawing the viewer's focus to the essential actors in the foreground of such dramatic action is also successfully employed in the Seattle Art Museum panel featuring scenes from the *Aeneid*. The thick mass of soldiers descending from the hills in the upper right corner merges in the foreground with the legion of soldiers coursing out of the palace in the center, but immediately the eye is drawn to the Amazon warriors who have come to the aid of Aeneas once again (the first time, they aided the Trojans against the Greeks in the days leading up to the final battle of the Trojan war).

The Amazons alone are fully legible in this section of the panel, resplendent in their almost otherworldly costumes as they draw their bows in the midst of a bloody onslaught. The soldiers all appear in full body armor, with little differentiation between one and the other. The optical effect is that of a large swath of grey, with silhouettes nearly obscured, that serves as a backdrop to the Amazon women, whose own costume is white, accented with gold. In employing this technique, Uccello experiments with perspective, attempting to create depth by varying the play of light across the figures and objects in the landscape. Varying the play of light and brightness of color provides a sense of space receding into the background, and serves well to provide a sense of chaotic action in the foreground without overwhelming the featured storyline. Difficult as it is to tell friend from foe, Uccello here provided his patron with the spectacle of war, and specifically one that was fought by the ancient hero whose attendance to

[222] Alain J. Lemaître and Erich Lessing, *Florence and the Renaissance: The Quattrocento* (Paris: Terrail, 1993), 131–132.

duty and leadership ensured that the Roman line would be founded.

Unlike the Aeneas of the poem, the Aeneas of this panel is not immersed in the bitter fight unfolding on the right of the panel. He is instead depicted only as he disembarks from the ship, in the midst of a ceremonial greeting by the king of Latium. Virgil takes great pains to explain the role of Aeneas in the battle over the disputed land that would become Rome, so it is noteworthy that Uccello chooses instead to indicate Aeneas' first arrival rather more prominently than the episodes that follow. Rather than showing his prowess as a warrior, Uccello has depicted Aeneas as a ruler "coming home" to his land and greeting his adoring public.

2.10 Aeneas as Pater Patriae

The power of Aeneas as a model of virtue is thus rooted in his narrative role as "leader" or "father" of the Roman people, not his physical strength or battle prowess, and Virgil stresses this important point by referring to him often as "pater". Cristoforo Landino's poem, written for Giovanni Salvetti, but enumerating the many excellent qualities of Cosimo de' Medici, provides a contemporary affirmation of this common characterization of Virgil's hero. In his flattering poem, Landino compares the venerable head of the Medici family to Aeneas, and in so doing, manages to surreptitiously exalt him to a status above Virgil's man. Landino claims he "shall sing the truth and tell the glory of true virtue, / and the prizes merited by the house of Medici."[223] Here the implied audience shifts away from Salvetti and directly to Cosimo, when Landino continues, "Both the people and the Senate, Cosimo, will stand witness, / that nothing in your city is more famous than you."[224]

The praiseworthy virtues of Cosimo, according to the poet, are his patriotism (patriae pietas), wisdom, and kindness offered to those less fortunate than he. For these reasons, Landino

[223] Cristoforo Landino and Mary P. Chatfield, *Poems* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), 199; "To Giovanni Salvetti, On the Greatness of Cosimo."
[224] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, 199.

goes on to dub him the father of his country, noting that his strength does not come from arms but rather "lies in the urban toga."[225] In this manner, Cosimo is again likened to Aeneas, as his physical involvement in wartime activities is subordinated by Virgil—a characterization that representations of Aeneas in Florentine visual culture emphasize. A few lines later, Landino makes the connection between Aeneas and Cosimo more explicit when he opines "Here I would wish to have composed your poem, Publius, / that in which you told of our Trojan father's deeds. / For why should Cosimo be unworthy of such honor?"[226] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the title *Pater Patriae* was officially bestowed upon Cosimo after his death, ensuring that his reputation and fame would be intertwined with that of Aeneas in the minds of Florentines in posterity.

The phrase "pater patriae" comes from the ancient Latin epithet bestowed upon individuals, both actual and legendary, whose service to the Roman people was considered to be commendable and praiseworthy. Fifteenth-century humanists would have known the inscription on Trajan's column in Rome that endowed his person with this honorific as well as from coins, which included the inscription PP to denote the office of the Roman emperor. Thus, the use of this term by Landino in praising Cosimo would have been laden with meaning. A point of visual connection between this idea and the visualization of Troy is the column that is often depicted in Apollonio's Trojan cityscape. This is likely a result of the conflation of the words Troiano and Traiano. Manuscript illustrations of Carthaginians hard at work, building their city, closely resemble similar scenes of industry found on the column in Rome.

Aeneas' paternal obligations are to Ascanius, his son by his first wife, the Trojan Creusa, but also to the Trojan families who followed him from their ruined city by the sea. Virgil furthers

[225] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, 197. See especially lines 43-46: "Caesar was great, but his greatness was in arms alone; / your greatness, Cosimo, lies in the urban toga. / He oppressed his land with arms and savage tyranny, / but you a special care for liberty informs."
[226] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, 199.

this sense of paternal responsibility when in book six of the epic poem, Aeneas gazes out over his future progeny in the underworld and in so doing, is impressed with the immense responsibility he has to the future citizens of Rome in embracing his destiny.[227] Both the natural and the metaphorical use of the concept of "father" resonated with Florentines, whose own relationship to these ideas was nuanced and reflected both valences of the word.

Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio* exemplifies one of the most well-known uses of this traditional metaphor, which emerged in the early fifteenth century and is tied directly to an understanding of the Florentine Republic's origins as descended from the ancient Romans. Bruni significantly expands upon the definition of both father and family, casting the citizens of the republic itself as individuals related to and obligated to one another via family ties, while the institutions of the republic become the benevolent father. Bruni wrote: "Now if the glory, nobility, virtue, grandeur, and magnificence of the parents can also make the sons outstanding, no people in the entire world can be as worthy of dignity as are the Florentines, for they are born from such parents who surpass by a long way all mortals in every sort of glory."[228] In other words, the family unit is here cast as the microcosm and building block of the Florentine republican city-state, or macrocosm.[229]

The responsibilities of a father were numerous: they aided in the education of their children, guided their wives, and, most importantly, were keen to produce sons who would—in the fullness of time—inherit the patrimony, perpetuate the family name and become stewards of its wealth. These two understandings collide in an interesting way in *cassone* panels featuring Aeneas, which played an important role in negotiating the terms of marriage, or the first step to

[227] Virgil and Fitzgerald, *The Aeneid*, 6.1014–6.1210.
[228] Bruni, "Panegyric to the City of Florence," in *The Earthly Republic,* trans. Kohl, 150.
[229] Jennifer Nevile, *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 323.

creating a family. They are particularly intriguing because they offer a view into how the civic ideology of the republic was made manifest in the production of art. While literary expositions of the *Aeneid* depended upon words to describe the various understandings one should have (conditioned by the education one received as a young man, of course) of the poem and its larger "veiled" meanings, artists expressed the relational metaphor of Aeneas as leader and father in a more direct way.

One of the effects of this choice was that viewers were provided with noteworthy exemplars that allowed them to rehearse the new civic ideology with each viewing instance. Artists such as Apollonio di Giovanni accomplished this connection in the viewers' minds by expressing Aeneas as a proud and judicious leader. Though the patrons of these works cannot be identified with any precision, it is reasonable to assume that such elaborately worked panels produced in workshops headed by such talented artists as Apollonio di Giovanni, Paolo Uccello, and Lo Scheggia could only have been afforded by families with substantial wealth. The manner in which Aeneas is presented in each of these cases presents a theme that would have been deeply embraced by members of the elite who had significant political clout. By depicting Aeneas engaging in various aspects of statecraft, such as bestowing gifts upon fellow monarchs, like Dido, and participating in elaborate banquets and feasts, artists are able to foreground Aeneas' important role as father of his people by conflating his role as natural father with his responsibilities as civic father and leader. The effect is compounded when such scenes appear on marriage panels, which would have reminded all who saw the chests, as well as the newly-wed couple to whom they belonged, of their roles in society. The new husband would soon be a father, if all proceeded as hoped, and was therefore reminded of his role in the civic sphere, which was essentially understood via civic rhetoric as a macrocosmic family that mirrored the

smaller, natural family. Whether or not the male owners and viewers of these chests would themselves occupy roles in the civic sphere that provided leadership for others, as Aeneas was called to do, they would nevertheless seek inspiration and hope from the example of such a one. The figure of Aeneas, both in literature and in the visual culture of the period, thus supported prevalent and widely circulated ideas about fathers and civic leaders. In works on panel, these ideas found their most emphatic expression in motifs that largely focus on feasting, ritual offerings, ceremonial processions, and hand gestures meant to evoke in the viewers' minds the essence of diplomatic negotiations.

One overarching similarity that depictions of Aeneas share is the focus on civic and ritual spectacle. This is unsurprising in light of the scholarship by scholars who have studied marriage rituals and *cassoni*, because we are now aware that *cassoni* had an important role in the ritual processions that marked a bride's move between the house of her birth and the domicile she would share with her new husband. While much good ink has been spilled on the hortatory messages women would have been expected to draw from the *cassone* panels after being installed in their permanent location in the bedroom, less has been focused on the male viewer's absorption of these scenes. That Aeneas features so prominently in the production of *cassoni* in fifteenth-century Florence thus points to a specific desire to have represented ideals that carried meanings beyond the bedroom and family for the man of the home.

The iconographic and narrative elements combined to present a complex mise en scène that allowed for the possibility of multiple viewing experiences. As Adrian Randolph eloquently posits, "…*cassoni*, through their repetition, amassing of detail, and fabric-like textures, seem to be less about presenting information than about storing it for future use. The information on the surfaces of these intricate, painted panels is geared toward repeated viewing. Like the chest

itself, it is a space of memory. Better put, it is a memoryscape: a field for reflection over time. One may 'read' a *cassone* panel like one might read a text, but this type of sequential reading is not only quite taxing, it also runs against the fundamental character of these panels. They offer fragmented narratives to be stored in the mind of the beholder; there, they certainly may cohere around a pattern recorded in a foundational text, but they can also be reconstituted quite easily in new ways."[230] Because the space of the *cassone* panel is essentially a space designated for didactic or exemplary purposes, depictions of Aeneas in this context would have resonated in a distinctive way with viewers of these panels.

Aeneas' civic responsibilities are highlighted in various ways in each of these panels, and each visual reference to his leadership role is shown through actions that highlight his value as a model of virtue for fifteenth-century audiences. Upon his arrival in Carthage, he must first determine the situation at hand, represented by Apollonio in both the Jarves and Hannover panels by showing him gazing over the land and consulting with his mother (Figs. 2.1-2.4). To further ensure the safety of his people in a land and nation that may or may not be hostile to the recently disembarked Trojans, Aeneas must observe the people whose land he treads. Venus provides a shield of invisibility for both Aeneas and his loyal companion Achates so that they can assess the situation before revealing themselves to Dido. Apollonio has depicted each of these protective measures on the first panel of the Hannover pair (Figs. 2.1 & 2.11-2.12). As if to justify this overly cautious approach, Apollonio includes a representation of the hostile greeting the newly arrived ships received by the Queen's army. This, too, is out of an abundance of caution on Dido's part, as she explains in the poem, because she is only protecting her own people and city from would-be enemies. After assessing the situation from the side of the temple, the main scene

[230] Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Touching Objects: Intimate Experiences of Italian Fifteenth-Century Art (*New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014), 26-28.

in the center of the panel shows Dido greeting Aeneas. The prominence of this scene is only overtaken by the feasting scene in the pendant panel of the pair. Dividing the pictorial space into two almost equal sections, Apollonio juxtaposes the feast with the hunt that follows. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Dido and Aeneas' sojourn in the cave is boldly represented at the far right of the second panel. (Fig. 2.8) As Kallendorf and others have noted, the romantic encounter between the two leaders is perhaps the only moment of moral failing that can be attributed to the hero in the epic's entirety. Understanding the nature of both virtue and vice as it was characterized by Landino in his commentary, however, would have framed the way that viewers apprehended this apparent flaw in the hero's character. They only had to remember that Carthage and Aeneas' time in the city was an allegorical reference to the active life – the middle phase of a soul's journey from vice to perfect virtue.

It is reasonable, then, to assume that the husband and wife to whom the chest belonged would have responded to this image on at least two levels. In terms of their own marriage, the Dido and Aeneas scene should be read as a negative exemplum for both husband and wife. Dido represents in this more literal sense, the lustiness and untrustworthiness of women. She is also a cautionary tale for those who might seek to find love outside the bounds of marriage. Though her death is not represented, her suicide as a result of her depression prompted by Aeneas' abrupt departure and the loss of her virtue was well known to fifteenth-century audiences. When considered from another perspective, the male viewer would have reflected on the importance of striving to embody moral purity, just as Aeneas eventually did by heeding the divine order to depart Carthage and embrace his destiny, which included eventually marrying the chaste Lavinia on Italian shores. Though Apollonio would not have known Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses* or his commentary on Virgil, published seven and twenty-three years,

respectively, after the artist's death, his patrons would certainly have had the opportunity to attend Landino's first lectures on the poem. The humanist noted in his commentary on book 4 of the *Aeneid* that Dido and Aeneas were attracted to one another because, ultimately, both were interested in political ascendancy and power. This joint interest was in keeping with his overall exegesis of the poem, which argued for the soul's movement from the baser instincts in life represented by Troy, to the finer points of the active life, as located in Carthage, and then finally attaining the *summum bonum*, or the ideal life of contemplative virtue as represented by Rome. In this framework, the cave represents a necessary stop in the soul's journey and would have highlighted the important responsibilities the owner of the chest had to the republic. Though Landino's commentary was not published until 1488, it represents another possibility with regard to the multiple valences the scenes of *cassoni* could have for the male subject, even changing over time.

Because Carthage was understood to be the representation of the active life for those who were familiar with Landino's thoughts on the matter, it is even more appropriate that these scenes should be presented on panels that participated in the rituals of marriage. On the surface, episodes featuring the events of Carthage were desirable because of the ceremonial nature of Aeneas' visit to this North African land. They presented an opportunity to depict sumptuous costumes, made more precious by the addition of gold and silver leaf, and an opportunity to showcase the connection between the illustrious personages of the *Aeneid* and the wealthy newlyweds for whom the *cassoni* were intended. This was made apparent by the coats of arms often included somewhere on the panels, usually on the ships themselves. (Figs. 2.1-2.21)

2.11 Conclusion

Landino dedicated his commentary on Virgil's epic to the rather unfortunate son of

Lorenzo the Magnificent, Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici. In the dedication, Landino makes clear that the *Aeneid* should be seen as a handbook for those in positions of leadership, and while Florence at the time was ostensibly a republic, the Medici's hold on governmental bodies and institutions was no secret. It is perhaps ironic that this young "prince" ended up relinquishing his (and by extension, his family's) power over the city in a series of unfortunate events, prompted by poor decisions, that eventually led to his banishment from the city. Had Piero followed in the footsteps of Aeneas, as so many humanists recommended for those who sought both fame and virtue, his fate might have been entirely transformed. In fifteenth-century Florence, the heroic virtue of Aeneas was redefined in subtle ways from its poetic origins. Rather than focus on the warrior's instinct to participate and lead in battle, as Virgil characterizes his hero, both humanists and artists redefined Aeneas' virtue to reflect the importance of familial leadership, careful deliberation in political matters, and civic duty. In this way, Aeneas was reformulated as the champion of republican values, whose deeds served as an exhortation of leading a well-balanced life.

CHAPTER 2 FIGURES

Fig. 2.1 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 25 1/8 x 72 9/16 in. (63.8 x 184.3 cm) Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hannover.

Fig. 2.2 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid II*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 24 7/8 x 72 2/3 in. (63.2 x 184.5 cm) Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hannover.

Fig. 2.3 Apollonio di Giovanni, *The Shipwreck of Aeneas*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 19 3/4 x 64 5/8 in. (50.17 x 164.15 cm) Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Fig. 2.4 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneas at Carthage*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 19 9/16 x 63 ¾ in. (49.7 x 161.9 cm) Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Fig. 2.5 Detail of the winds in Apollonio di Giovanni, *The Shipwreck of Aeneas*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 19 3/4 x 64 5/8 in. (50.17 x 164.15 cm) Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Fig. 2.6 Detail of Neptune calming the waves in Apollonio di Giovanni, *The Shipwreck of Aeneas*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 19 3/4 x 64 5/8 in. (50.17 x 164.15 cm) Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

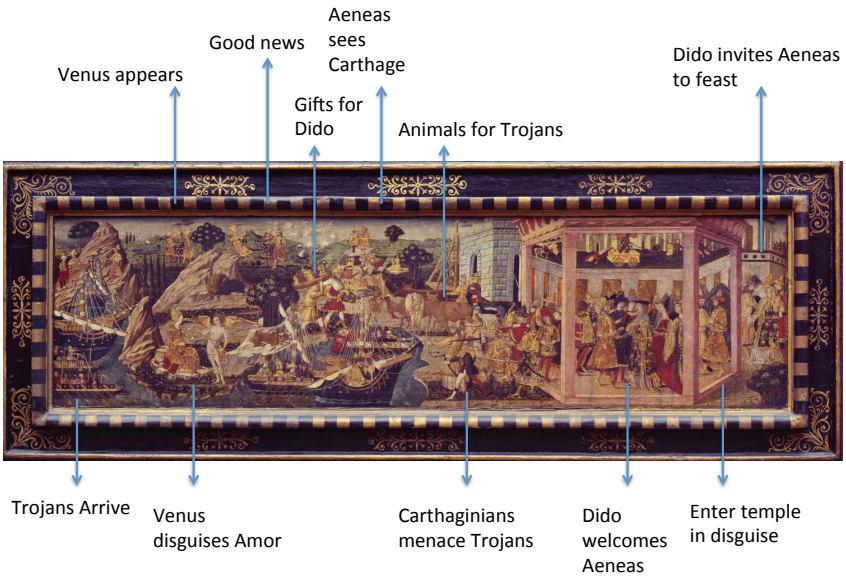

Fig. 2.7 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I*, ca. 1450. Tempera on Panel. 25 1/8 x 72 9/16 in. (63.8 x 184.3 cm) Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hannover.

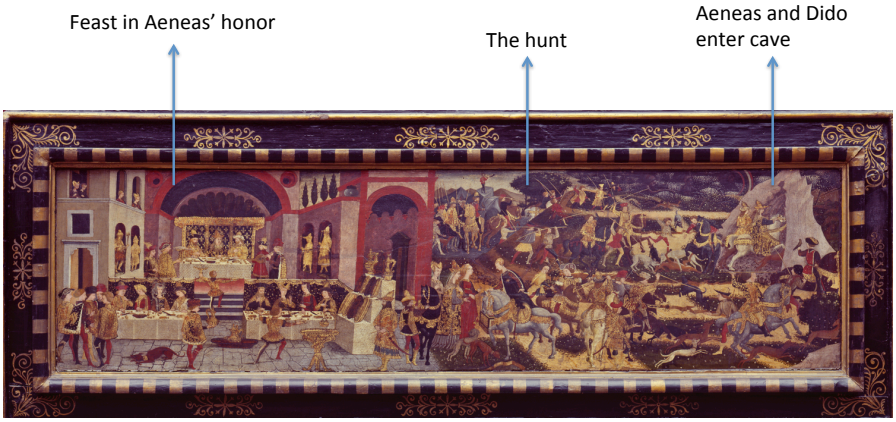

Fig. 2.8 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid II*, ca. 1450. Tempera on panel. 24 7/8 x 72 2/3 in. (63.2 x 184.5 cm) Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hannover.

Fig. 2.9 Details of architectural elements in Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I & II*, ca. 1450.

Fig. 2.10 Details of natural settings in Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I & II*, ca. 1450.

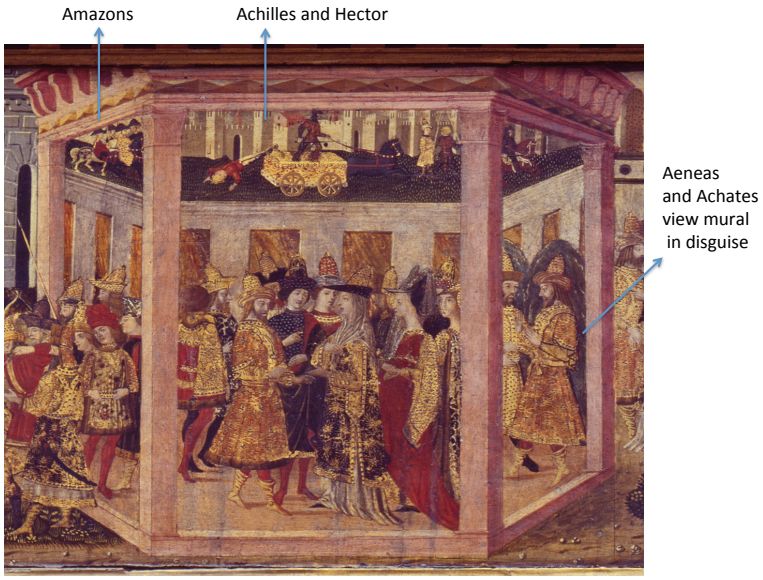

Fig. 2.11 Detail of murals in Juno's temple in Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I*, ca. 1450.

Fig. 2.12 Detail of Aeneas meeting Dido in Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid I*, ca. 1450.

Fig. 2.13 Pisanello, *Emperor John Palaeologus VIII*, 1438. Cast Bronze Medal. Diameter 4 in. (10.3 cm) British Museum, London.

Fig. 2.14 Detail of banquet costumes in Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneid II*, ca. 1450.

Fig. 2.15 Apollonio di Giovanni, *The Trojans Prepare Dinner*, miniature from Virgil, *Bucolics, Georgics, Aeneas*, ca. 1450-60. Cod. Ricc. 492, 65r, Riccardiana Library, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 2.16 School of Baccio Baldini, Aeneas, Latinus, Turnus in *Florentine Picture Chronicle*, 1470-75. Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk. 12 13/16 x 8 7/8 in. (32.6 x 22.6 cm), British Museum, London.

Fig. 2.17 School of Baccio Baldini, Aeneas, Lavinia, and Ascanius in *Florentine Picture Chronicle*, 1470-75. Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk. 12 13/16 x 8 7/8 in. (32.6 x 22.6 cm), British Museum, London.

Fig. 2.18 School of Baccio Baldini, Queen Dido in *Florentine Picture Chronicle*, 1470-75. Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk. 12 13/16 x 8 7/8 in. (32.6 X 22.6 cm.) British Museum, London.

Fig. 2.19 Mariano del Buono, *Virgilio* frontispiece, 15th c. Plut. 39.06, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 2.20 Detail of Trojan Horse and Judgment of Paris in Mariano del Buono, *Virgilio* frontispiece, 15th c. Plut. 39.06, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Italy.


Fig. 2.21 Paolo Uccello, *Episodes from the Aeneid* (Aeneas Arrives on the Shores of Latium), 1470. Tempera on panel. 16 1/8 x 61 1/2 in. (41 x 156.2 cm) Seattle Art Museum, Seattle.


Fig. 2.22 Giovanni di ser Giovanni (Lo Scheggia), *Scenes from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Le Roman de Troie*, 1455-60. Tempera on panel. Musée National de la Renaissance, Écouen, France.

Fig. 2.23 Publii Vergilii Marones Opera, *Dido in the Woods of Death*, ca. 1470-1499, Ms. 837, fol. 156v. Biblioteca de la Universitad, Valencia, Spain.

Fig. 2.24 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Androgeos Believes Aeneas and Soldiers to be Greeks,* miniature from Virgil, *Bucolics, Georgics, Aeneas*, ca. 1450-60. Cod. Ricc. 492, 83r, Riccardiana Library, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 2.25 Apollonio di Giovanni, *Aeneas Carries His Father and Leads Son Out of Troy*, miniature from Virgil, *Bucolics, Georgics, Aeneas*, ca. 1450-60. Cod. Ricc. 492, 89r, Riccardiana Library, Florence, Italy.

CHAPTER 3

TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION: THE FACES AND FUNCTIONS OF HERCULES

3.1 Introduction

Unlike Aeneas, the entry of Hercules into the Florentine visual record was not catalyzed by his status as a literary hero, emerging fully formed from the pen of a single epic poet. Certainly humanists knew him from a variety of ancient sources, but these accounts, which often focused on cherry-picked combinations of episodes from Hercules' heroic life, had first to be braided together to form any semblance of a cohesive narrative. Even then, the primary intention of Florentine scholars when treating this hero was never to create a comprehensive timeline of his life and labors, a task that would have been a Herculean feat, indeed.

Complicating matters and contributing to this fifteenth-century humanist approach to the hero's contextualization as well as his Renaissance afterlife in visual culture, ancient writers had invoked the hero and his labors for a variety of reasons that were not necessarily always aligned in purpose, resulting in accounts that raised as many questions as clarifications. In Strabo's *Geographia*, for instance, Hercules is cited as the reason why the configuration of a certain Italian river and valley appeared the way they did,[231] while Ovid provides a sketch of his complex personality and motivations by embedding elaborations of particularly noteworthy episodes within a conversation between Achelous and Theseus at an outdoor dinner table.[232] Hercules likewise played a starring role in the theatrical productions of the ancient world, serving as unfortunate protagonist in Athenian tragedies and the dimwitted, often drunk, strongman of Old Comedy. For the Romans in general, he was a figure of great religious significance and

[231] Strabo, Hans C. Hamilton, and William Falconer, *The Geography of Strabo*, Vol. 2 (London: H.G. Bohn, 1854), 170.
[232] Ovid, *Metamorphoses: A New Verse Translation*, Trans. David A. Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004), 232-242; 245-247.

veneration, but for Virgil specifically he served as the model whereby the poet legitimized and presented Italy with its new hero and deified ancestor—Aeneas, who was meant to be compared with Augustus, and whose parallels to Hercules are a consistent trope in the *Aeneid*.[233]

Karl Galinsky notes that the absence in the Renaissance of a coherent "framework of literary creation" for the demi-god was filled by scholars whose response to this hero was through "exegesis pure and simple."[234] In other words, humanists were able to derive meaning from Hercules in ways that were not circumscribed by one specific narrative inherited from the ancient world. Instead, Hercules and his extraordinary ordeals were considered to be amenable to various interpretations that could serve myriad purposes, often allegorical, within different literary and philosophical contexts. This particular mode of humanist reception can also account for the ways in which the figure of Hercules was expressed in visual mediums. By privileging exegesis, specific labors of Hercules, whether major or minor, could be extracted from the patchwork quilt of his narrative lives and transformed into visual signs that both reflected intentional meanings and invited a variety of viewer responses. Humanist exegesis imbued individual episodes and the character of Hercules' person as hero with specific meanings, which could then be modified or adapted by artists in visual representations to suit the specific needs of the patron.

The importance of Hercules as a symbol of Florentine political power during the Renaissance has long been a focus of discussion for scholars, but acknowledging the role of this demi-god in the vibrant and shifting formulation of the heroic ideal requires a more comprehensive investigation into the ways representations of this figure were deployed, utilized,

[233] Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Totowa, N.J: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 129-149.
[234] Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme,* 196.

and understood in the collective imagination of the Florentine Republic.[235] Discussions of both the public and private uses of Herculean imagery in the Quattrocento have generally focused on patterns of appropriation for political purposes—first by the commune, then the Medici, and, following the expulsion of the family in 1494, the Great Council that governed the city until its return in 1512—at the expense of certainly less well-known, yet critical, modes of consumption and representation that inform the visual dialectic of this figure in Florence. While scholarship that falls into this category illuminates an important moment in the history of the representation of Hercules in the early modern era in general, and Florence in particular, an examination that overwhelmingly privileges the agency of only the most powerful or prominent institutions and so-called first family of the city has led to a significant lacuna in our understanding of how other families that comprised the community related to this vaunted hero.

In this case study, I examine the symbolic and allegorical utility of Herculean iconography, as made manifest in representations of the demi-god in both art and literature. This analysis is framed by a particular focus on how the labors of Hercules could be reconfigured in new ways to establish unique visual relationships for and to the city, and to its illustrious history. To this end, an examination of how Florentine families employed Hercules in decorative schemes within their palaces will reveal the multivalent ways Herculean imagery could operate within the domestic sphere. Without question, he was deployed in a symbolic function for the city of Florence and even the Medici, but by focusing on the various episodes of his mythological life chosen for depiction by the Benizzi, Gondi, and Spinelli families, I will clarify how these trends intersect with the notion of *abbondanza*, a Florentine conceptualization of economic fruitfulness. In addition, this chapter will explore the idea of Hercules as the "ideal"

[235] Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953) 20.

heroic model, both in visual form and in deed, in order to trace the reverberations of humanist exegesis in visualizing modes. For example, artists like Bertoldo di Giovanni picked up on these ideas and turned to images of Hercules, both ancient and medieval, to formulate their designs for less well-known mythological heroes. This study thus endeavors to provide a sense of the constellation of interpretations for the figure of Hercules that existed in the fifteenth century, and will demonstrate that each point of intersection provides new opportunity to clarify his role in the construction of the heroic ideal in early Renaissance Florence.

3.2 Hercules in the Florentine Polis

Almost four decades ago, Leopold Ettlinger published his incisive study on how representations of this mythological hero functioned within the early construction and continued maintenance of the city's identity.[236] He concluded that the early adoption of this figure in Florence had specifically to do with the moral and politically significant lenses through which he was understood. Ettlinger supported his conclusion by foregrounding the Herculean imagery embedded within in the city's most prominent ecclesiastical facades, the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and Giotto's campanile. He read these images in conjunction with the moralizing value Coluccio Salutati provided for them in his allegorizing treatise of the hero's labors, *De laboribus Herculis*, demonstrating that this hero could as easily represent pride in the city's political autonomy as well as Christianized ideas of fortitude.[237] Already in 1277, the commune of Florence was using this mythological hero on its seal, as can be ascertained from archival records,[238] effectively ensuring that the association between the hero and the commune would be

[236] Leopold D. Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*,16.2 (1972): 119-142.
[237] Ettlinger 123.
[238] Maria M. Donato and Daniela Parenti, *Dal Giglio al David: Arte Civica a Firenze Fra Medioevo e Rinascimento,* (Florence: Giunti, 2013) 64; Ettlinger's earliest date for the use of the Hercules seal is 1281, and this difference is no doubt due to new evidence unearthed in the years since the publication of his study. For Ettlinger's date, see page 119 of his article, "Hercules Florentinus."; see also Hans W. Hubert, "Gestaltungen des Heroischen in den

solidified far beyond the boundaries of the city. Each official correspondence sent from the seat of the government thus reified the city's claim to power and independence from tyranny, because the seal served as a visual reminder of the republican ideals of the city.

Recipients of letters from the *podestà* were presented with an image of a vigilant demigod, whose long, knotty club rested easily on his shoulder, while his source of strength and protection, the Nemean lion skin, was securely fastened around his muscular arm. This seal was still used in official business during the ducal years of Florence in 1560, where an example is preserved on a letter now in the Archivio di Stato of Florence.[239] (Fig. 3.1) It closely resembles an eighteenth-century woodcut after the original seal from 1282. (Fig. 3.2) From the wax impression and woodcut, we see that, although the hero is stilled momentarily, his pose is not entirely static. Hercules' right leg is bent at the knee, and with his head rendered in profile the figure has been imbued with the potential for vigorous movement. Clumsy as it appears by comparison, the total effect nevertheless calls to mind Michelangelo's *David*, whose readiness to face down tyrants and giants is also implied in his stance, the weapon at rest, and a surveilling gaze. (Fig. 3.3)

Ettlinger pointed out that no less than Dante himself, revered son and poet of the city, believed Hercules to be a corollary to this Old Testament king.[240] Justifying the use of combat in order to secure influence ordained by God, in the second book of his political treatise, *De monarchia*, the poet elaborates on examples from religious history and mythology in order to demonstrate to his reader that even when opponents are unevenly matched, divine justice will prevail. It was due to the "strength sustained by God in a champion" that David outmatched

---

Florentiner David-Plastiken," *Heroen und Heroisierungen in der Renaissance,* Edited by Achim Aurnhammer, and Manfred Pfister (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag in Kommission, 2013), 182

[239] Maria M. Donato and Daniela Parenti, eds., *Dal Giglio Al David*, 64-65. This letter is in the Carte Strozziane, series III, 115, c. 19r.

[240] Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus," 127.

Goliath, Hercules vanquished Antaeus, and Aeneas slew Turnus.[241] It is unsurprising, then, that a surviving edition of the poet's *Commedia*, together with Landino's detailed commentary, features a red velvet cover enhanced with an intricate niello medallion of Hercules that recalls the sigil of the commune, which would have been used for official business when Dante was just a young boy. (Fig. 3.4) With legs spread in a bold stance, Hercules stands erect. Rather than resting the club upon his shoulders as in the sigil, the hero has planted it upon the ground in a manner that suggests both his self-satisfaction at having completed another difficult labor, in this case, overcoming the Hydra's many vicious heads, and his readiness to engage another enemy should it become necessary. (Fig. 3.5) Another difference between the thirteenth-century sigil and this medallion is the fact that the artist, who belonged to the circle of Baccio Baldini, chose to depict Hercules wearing the protective lion skin, which engulfs his head and is then draped over the crook of his arm.

Not dedicated to the Medici, as one might be forgiven for anticipating, but to the Florentine *signoria*, the first edition of Landino's commentaries was published in August of 1481 by Nicolò di Lorenzo Tedesco in Florence. Two niello clasps at the top and bottom of the cover contain the republic's shield, upon which was written LIBERTAS, and the crimson cross of the *popolo*. (Fig. 3.6) These additional details, along with Landino's choice of dedicatee, demonstrate the degree to which the symbolic valences of Hercules were intertwined with popular republican values. Extending this visual relationship, the first page of the commentary is richly illuminated with a portrait of Dante embedded within the first letter, and then on opposing sides of the frame are depicted a sleeping lion, reminiscent of the Florentine *marzocco* and the live lions kept in the city square,[242] and another standing Hercules, virtually identical to the

[241] Dante Alighieri and Prue Shaw, *Monarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), II. 9. 6-15.
[242] Adrian Randolph, "Il Marzocco: Lionizing the Florentine State," *Coming About– A Festschrift for John*

medallion featured on the front cover except for the absence of the Hydra. (Figs. 3.7-3.8) Across the top of the page are strategically placed in corners and in the center a shield with the red Florentine lily, the red cross of the popolo, and on the right, representing the Guelph party to which Dante had belonged, an eagle snatching a serpent in its talons. Two heraldic lions rearing up on their hind legs serve as the fearsome protectors of the popolo's shield, and signify the continuing importance placed upon the idea of popular government in Florence.

To Florentines, Hercules was also much more than just a visual symbol of their city's might and warrior for liberty; in poetic formulations, Florence was, in fact, "Hercolo novo", as Franco Sacchetti wrote in a patriotic verse from 1377.[243] The language employed by members of the Florentine republic in their writings, such as this epithet, when invoking the name of this hero was frequently not merely descriptive; rather, it was self-reflexive in that as a republican body, they collectively perceived themselves to be Hercules renewed.

3.3 Hercules Types

Three typological groups emerge when taking into account the possible functions of Herculean imagery in Florence and the various settings in which it was displayed, though admittedly, the boundaries are not always fixed. Classifying these objects provides an opportunity to examine how the figure of Hercules could be deployed, the meaning with which it was invested, and what the social and artistic implications of its depiction were. Artistic renderings of the demi-god and his exploits are often able to exist comfortably in multiple categories, sometimes by virtue of their significance and appropriation at different points in Florentine history. The lost over life-size Medici canvases by Antonio Pollaiuolo and other

---

Shearman, Eds. Lars R. Jones and Louisa Chevalier Matthew (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Art Museums, 2000), 13.

[243] Maria M. Donato, "Hercules and David in the Early Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio: Manuscript Evidence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 54 (1991): 87.

objects belonging to the Medici prove this last point, as has often been cited.[244] At the time of the family's removal from the city two years after Lorenzo's death in 1492, these works were confiscated by government officials and redeployed in service of the new governmental structure, sans Medici.

Visual representations of the hero at this time were not limited to strictly civic and political contexts, but it is the category that has received the most attention in recent decades, and has unquestionably dominated the discussion regarding heroic imagery in Florentine scholarship for at least the last century. Into this group can be placed both functional objects with symbolic significance, and symbolic objects with the potential to promote a political ideology or social agenda, whether publically, as a message meant for the citizen body, current foes, would-be aggressors, or privately, in the recesses of domestic life. To avoid becoming inescapably mired in analyzing works according to their potential to transmit political and civic ideals (because no doubt, most would fit this description), as it can quickly become a swampy and confusing endeavor, I have divided the large number of works produced in Florence during the fifteenth century into those that appeared in public spaces, those intended to be consumed in a more private setting, and those related works with Herculean themes that influenced how each of the works in these first groupings was understood by the Florentine population or provided models for artists who produced works centered on the heroism of Hercules.

An examination of the 278 entries that appear when searching "Hercules" in the Census

[244] See especially Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Alison Wright, "The Myth of Hercules" *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il Suo Mondo: Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Firenze, 9-13 Giugno 1992)*, Ed. Gian C. Garfagnini (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1994), 323-339; Patricia Simons, "Hercules in Italian Renaissance Art: Masculine Labour and Homoerotic Libido," *Art History* 31.5 (2008): 632–664; Francis Ames-Lewis, "Representing the Nude Figure in Early Renaissance Florentine Art," *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60*. Eds. Beatrice Strozzi Paolozzi and Marc Bormand (Firenze: Mandragora, 2013), 61-67.

of Antique Works Known in the Renaissance Database yields a number of observations that can help to clarify the status of the relationship between Quattrocento artists, patrons, and ancient representations of this hero. Of the 278 entries, only twenty-five or twenty-six can securely be traced to the Quattrocento in terms of having been known during the period. Among these two dozen or so entries that would have been available to certain individuals in the Renaissance, well over half, in fact most, are gems or cameos that belonged to Pietro Barbaro's collection, many of which migrated into Lorenzo de' Medici's possession in the last decades of the fifteenth century and are now in the Naples museum. This surely does not mean that more ancient representations of Hercules were not circulated or available at this time. An attempt to document the provenance of coins and medals is notoriously difficult, because as Roberto Weiss noted long ago, coins were among the most common ancient objects to be encountered (whether lying upon the ground or unearthed by farmers or layers of foundations) and to be pocketed and subsequently sold to interested antiquarians.[245] Thus, one might reasonably suspect that coins with the heads of Hercules were much more numerous in the fourteenth and fifteenth century than what the Census of Antique Works is able to document in its already rich compilation. This is particularly the case when one considers that the most frequently represented figure in the ancient world was Hercules, the favorite hero of Minerva.[246]

When taking into account the generally small-scale of the objects that most often represented the hero's exploits as encountered by a Quattrocento antiquarian, it is possible to make several other assumptions. That Renaissance sculptures and other representations of Hercules also remained small until at least the end of the fifteenth century all around Italy (with the exception of Pollaiuolo's large canvases for the Medici and the Benizzi terracotta relief,

[245] Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1969), 37.
[246] "Heracles," *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)* (Zürich: Artemis, 1981), vol. 4, pt..1, 728.

discussed later) must be considered. This is true of his representation on *cassoni*, where he is often depicted as participating in one or another of the epic adventures led by heroes such as Jason, as well as the sculpture by Bertoldo di Giovanni, the paintings and sculptures by the Pollaiuolo brothers, and the relief sculptures for the Vatican created by another Florentine artist, Filarete. Even the Hercules reliefs on the Porta della Mandorla, dating from the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century are small in scale when juxtaposed with the scale of the door (and the façade) itself.

Joy Kenseth has compellingly argued that the reason for this miniaturization of existing large-scale monuments in the fifteenth and later sixteenth centuries in part has to do with the thrill Renaissance artists and audiences alike felt when something known to be colossal was represented on a miniature scale.[247] Such tiny renderings describing monumental feats also showcased the virtuosity of the artist, and contributed to the demand for these types of works, just as they did in the ancient world.[248] There are two more possibilities, ones that likely work in concert with Kenseth's thesis, that fueled the creation of Hercules images in this direction. First, it is important to point out that the only large-scale figural sculptures that existed at this time took as their subjects Christian heroes or sage men whose exploits were either spiritual in nature, or heralded from the origins of Christianity in the Roman period, when religion came to a fraught head with the pagan ways of the Romans.[249] Given the absence of mythological imagery in monumental public sculpture, it is not unreasonable to assume that most representations of Hercules in the fifteenth-century were meant for private viewing, with the patron holding the

[247] Joy Kenseth, "The Virtue of Littleness: Small-scale Sculptures of the Italian Renaissance," *Looking at Italian Renaissance* Sculpture, Ed. Sarah Blake McHam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 128-148.
[248] See especially Kenseth's discussion of ancient poets Statius and Martial, whose ekphrastic accounts of the small sculpture of Hercules created by Lysippos for Alexander the Great elaborate upon the appeal of miniature bronzes, 129-131; on technical virtuosity of artists, see 134-135.
[249] Sarah Blake McHam, "Public Sculpture in Renaissance Florence," *Looking at Italian Renaissance* Sculpture, ed. Sarah Blake McHam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 150-152.

power to limit access to the object. Second, one may note that it would have been out of sheer practicality that these representations of Hercules remained small – the ancient models themselves were small.

With Hercules, we also see the first attempts to render a mythological hero in three-dimensional form in sculpture by Bertoldo and the Pollaiuolo brothers – a trend Antico took up later in the fifteenth century. Aeneas, as we have seen, was consigned to two-dimensionality, whether in *cassoni*, in manuscripts, or in drawings. Not until the sixteenth century does Virgil's hero make the transition to large-scale representation, thanks to Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo* in the Vatican palace. Then, finally in the second decade of the seventeenth-century, Bernini created a sculptural group that features Aeneas' most difficult labor as he escaped his burning city with the household gods, his father on his back, and his young son trailing closely behind. It would seem that the classical precepts of sculpture that dominated the art in Florence during the Renaissance were not conducive to depicting a hero so closely associated with text, which in turn foregrounded the hero's virtue through continuous narrative action. This would need to wait until an aspect of time and continuous action could be rendered in stone, as was Bernini's forte.

3.4 Beyond the Medici: Florentine Families and Depictions of Hercules

Hercules' presence can also be traced throughout the stately halls and courtyards of prominent Florentine families. Because Hercules was so ubiquitous throughout the fabric of the republic, and retained a political valence, it is unsurprising that visualizations of this hero were also an important element in the decorative programs commissioned by patrons. Although the role of this mythological hero has been extensively studied in the context of the Medici palazzo, the ways in which he was displayed in other palaces in order to convey something about individual and familial identity has to this point been largely overlooked. When it has been

attended to, the unexamined assumption has often been that representations of Hercules, wherever they might occur, were meant to indicate loyalty to Florence and/or the Medici. This is, however, not always the case.

By utilizing what visual evidence remains as well as what is known of the family's life and legacy, a nuanced picture emerges of the significant role this hero played in both the private and public lives of families. Apart from the fifteenth-century Medici, who owned three larger-than-life paintings of Hercules completing his labors, a small sculpture of Hercules battling Antaeus, and various antique objects that bore his visage,[250] the palaces of the Gondi, Spinelli, and Benizzi families of Florence also incorporated Hercules into their decorative programs. Each of these works is extant today, though the Benizzi terracotta has lost some of its original fifteenth-century context due to subsequent remodeling by the Guicciardini after they purchased the palazzo in the early sixteenth century. Despite losses of original context, the works themselves provide much valuable information about the patrons who commissioned them. From the episodes chosen for depiction as well as the mediums, it is also possible to determine intended readings, especially when analyzed in conjunction with what can be excavated from archival documents and contemporary texts. Thus, taken together, a more complete view of familial ambitions, as well as how representations of Hercules could be personalized to convey a family narrative, can be constructed.

The most striking element that these examples of Herculean imagery held in common when created for a domestic context is the imaginative approaches undertaken in terms of design, medium, and subject. Though not often departing from the most frequently depicted episodes of Hercules' life, families like the Gondi, for instance, were able to more precisely align themselves

[250] Richard Stapleford, trans., *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press: 2013). See for instance entries translated on pages 86, 98-99, 114.

with the common goals and perceived economic benefits of living in the city of Florence by combining Hercules within a larger visual program or, in the case of the Benizzi family, to create a visual reminder of a venerated thirteenth-century ancestor, whose courage in the face of papal pressure led to his eventual canonization. Each of these families, as I will argue, employed the figure of Hercules in their ongoing efforts to differentiate themselves from other families who might ostensibly have had similar goals and ambitions for increasing the prestige of the family name through politically or financially advantageous marriage, participation in the governance of the city, and in acquiring economic fortune. The various myths of Hercules thus provided ample opportunity for creative arrangement in order to set a family apart from others, and make a statement about personal virtue and virtuosity while simultaneously recognizing the importance of Hercules as a symbol of the state.

3.5 The Gondi Palace

At the end of the fifteenth century, Giuliano di Leonardo Gondi (1421-1501) began the construction of his new palace, which incorporated adjacent properties acquired for the expansion of the home he purchased in 1455, located in the Santa Croce district not far from the Arno.[251] Amongst the sumptuous decorations, he commissioned an eye-catching fireplace, which served as canvas for a decorative program designed by Giuliano da Sangallo that included an almost life-size terracotta statue of Hercules. (Fig. 3.9) Flanked on his left side by a sculpture of Samson, this bold, innovative construction was the natural focal point of the grand sala.

The numerous references, many subtle but certainly legible to members of the Gondi family and circle, to Hercules' narrative in the visual program of Giuliano's palazzo provide an opportunity to consider how this mythological hero was uniquely deployed to represent a

[251] Linda Pellecchia, "Untimely Death, Unwilling Heirs: The Early History of Giuliano da Sangallo's Unfinished Palace for Giuliano Gondi," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* (2004): 79-80.

familial legacy. The integration of Hercules and his attributes among the various accoutrements that functioned as visual symbols of the Gondi indicates the degree to which Giuliano Gondi called upon the heroic narrative as related by Ovid and other writers to firmly root his economic successes within the Florentine narrative of prosperity.

The Gondi family name can be traced back at least to the mid-thirteenth century in Florentine records, coinciding with the earliest date known for the deployment of Hercules as the symbol gracing the seal of the Florentine commune.[252] The family's reputation and upward mobility in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century can be attributed to their successful mercantile activity as *battilori*, or owners of shops that turned beaten silver and gold into threads that could then be used to weave sumptuous fabrics. When his father, Leonardo di Leonardo Gondi died in 1449, Giuliano Gondi, together with his brother Antonio, took over the family business. Due to the continuing efforts of Giuliano and his brother, the family fortune exponentially increased when they expanded their range of economic activities and also became involved in the shipping and sale of such precious metal threads to places as far afield as northern Europe.[253] Both the Banchi and the Spinelli, whose own fortunes were secured through the silk trade, were clients of Giuliano's company, purchasing gold and silver thread to be worked into brocaded silk.

Perhaps due at least in part to his growing success, and likely because of his close relationship with King Ferdinand I of Naples, the Gondi patriarch found himself on the wrong

---

[252] Andreas Tönnesmann, *Der Palazzo Gondi in Florenz* (Worms: Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983), 1. Tönnesmann points out that the name appears in Florentine records for the first time in 1248, and supplants Bilicozzi, presumably the name of the family's earlier ancestors. Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968) 157. Goldthwaite, on the other hand, pushes the date of when the Gondi name first cropped up in the records back to the late 12th century.

[253] Linda Pellecchia, "From Aesop's Fables to the 'Kalila Wa-Dimna': Giuliano da Sangallo's Staircase in the Gondi Palace in Florence," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 14/15 (2011): 142-143.

side of the Medici family's goodwill after being accused of forgery.[254] For this alleged fraud, he was banned from holding office in Florence and exiled until he was recalled in 1477. The option of participating in the civic life of the republic was extended to him once again following the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478, after he successfully aided the city (and the Medici) out of a tight spot with the duke of Naples, though he seemed generally content to stay out of such affairs, since records show he held office infrequently. For his help in procuring an alliance with Florence at a critical juncture, either Ferdinand I or his son, Duke Alfonso of Calabria, bequeathed to Giuliano Gondi the right to append a crown to his coat of arms, and bestowed on him the motto: "Non sine labore," which can be translated as, "Not without [hard] work."[255]

At the end of the fifteenth century, after acquiring numerous properties in the heart of the city's ceremonial and political sphere, Giuliano took steps to memorialize his legacy and highlight his substantial economic accomplishments. To that end, he commissioned Giuliano da Sangallo to design and head the construction of a new palace. Though he had lived in that neighborhood for over three decades, he was a transplant, having originally moved from the quarter where the Gondi family had traditionally dwelled, to the neighborhood of Santa Croce. This, as well as his good fortune, and the fact that he was in the twilight of his life, may have served as motivation for his decision to take on such a large building project. Giuliano's status as a prominent and wealthy member of the Florentine elite class was no doubt enhanced by his intimate relationship with the Neapolitan court and the kingdom of Naples. Having lent his financial support to King Ferdinand I, he was in an ideal position to negotiate for the city of Florence when relations between the two cities became fraught.

---

[254] Marco Calafati, "I Gondi: Storia di una grande famiglia tra l'Italia e la Francia," *Gondi: Una dinastia fiorentina e il suo palazzo = A Florentine Dynasty and its Palazzo*, Eds. Gabriele Morolli and Paolo Fiumi (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013), 19-22.
[255] Pellecchia, "From Aesop's Fables to the 'Kalila Wa-Dimna'," 138-139.

The relationship between Giuliano Gondi and Lorenzo de' Medici evidently took a turn for the better after these negotiations, because not only did Lorenzo stand in for the Duke of Calabria at the baptism ceremony of Giuliano's son when the duke was honored as godfather to the child, but he also helped the Gondi patriarch purchase a bit of land, usually off-limits, from the Florentine civic holdings, for the construction of his new palace.

3.6 Herculean Iconography in the Gondi Palace

The visual program, taken in its entirety, of Giuliano Gondi's new palazzo was a magnificent encomium to his ability to create wealth for himself and his family. Using symbols like the cornucopia, paired with the letters, SIN, which is considered by Gondi family historians to be a truncated form of his motto "Non sine labore", along with representations of Hercules, his attributes, and his river imagery (with which Hercules had a relationship), he attributes his great success at improving the Gondi family's economic fortune to himself, the river Arno, and hard labors. This fortune was symbolically guarded by figures like Hercules and his counterpart, Samson. Samson's inclusion in this program can be explained as first being visually important for maintaining the symmetry of the fireplace, but also as a sign that Gondi attributes his successes, at least in part, to God. This biblical equivalent of the mythological demi-god provides a way to emphasize the hand of faith in the successes of Giuliano Gondi.

Giuliano da Sangallo's terracotta sculpture of Hercules is singular in that it is, to my knowledge, the only extant representation of the hero in fifteenth-century Florentine art that depicts the hero gripping his club with both hands. (Fig. 3.10) The ominous weapon diagonally spans his body so that the spiked end is raised to the level of his left bicep. With legs widely spaced in a defensive stance, the slight turn of his torso to the right, paired with a significantly turned head, gives the impression that the hero watchfully guards all passage into and out of the

room. His terracotta counterpart, Samson, mirrors this positioning to his left, though his youthful visage and the placement of his hand resting on his hip is decidedly less threatening than the grizzled, bearded Hercules. It has been argued that Sangallo took as the inspiration for this biblical strongman the figure of St. George by Donatello,[256] and certainly similarities can be noted in the stance and youthful countenance of Samson. For the figure of Hercules, Giuliano da Sangallo has chosen to make a composite, comprised of two more common Hercules types: the standing Hercules whose club rests lightly on the ground and the standing Hercules whose club rests casually upon one shoulder. The latter is the type chosen for the early Florentine commune's seal, and often consists of the free arm arranged akimbo. As in many other examples, the Gondi Hercules wears the lion skin that highlights the successful conclusion of his combat against the ferocious Nemean lion. His club is actually a composite of the knotted club he is often paired with, both in literature and in visual representations, and a contemporary two-handed weapon—a version of the Morning Star, often carried by those engaged in armed conflict and consisting of a spike appended to the end of a length of wood. It also mirrors to some degree the crossed maces that comprise Giuliano Gondi's sigil.

The heroes presented as a pair make an emphatic reference to the virtue of fortitude, and comment upon the presence of this trait in Gondi. Some have argued that Hercules here should be seen as a commemoration of Gondi's time in the priorate, and while it is true that he served in in this capacity in the 1490s, his rather rare involvement in Florentine politics does not likely play a large role in his choice of Hercules for a sculpture. To better discern why Gondi may have wanted to include this figure in such a prominent location in his new palazzo, it is important to

[256] Marco Campigli, "Il Camino di Palazzo Gondi = The Fireplace of Palazzo Gondi," *Gondi: Una dinastia fiorentina e il suo palazzo = A Florentine Dynasty and its Palazzo,* Eds. Gabriele Morolli and Paolo Fiumi (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013), 136.

consider the important role Gondi played in increasing the wealth of his family. At his father's death, Gondi was tasked with taking over the family business on his own, because his brother was still too young. Though his father had done relatively well, placing the family on the track to great success, Gondi's often risky business decisions paid off handsomely, and he was able to take his family's wealth to new heights.[257] His greatest source of pride was his ability to create wealth. This pride is exemplified in his personal device, which was formed by a pair of flaming cornucopia that bookended a diamond. This device was appended to the façade of his new palace, and it was prominently featured on the walls of his courtyard and the ceiling above his grand staircase, also in the internal courtyard. Here, the cornucopia proliferated throughout the space, tied together in symmetrical bundles of four with a fluttering banner upon which was inscribed SIN. From here, it is prudent to turn to the entablature of the great fireplace, within which the carved frieze is ensconced. (Fig. 3.11)

The unique design of the Gondi fireplace was not lost on Giorgio Vasari, who enthusiastically noted that "Giuliano made a chimney-piece, very rich in carvings, and so varied and beautiful in composition, that up to that time there had never been seen the like, nor one with such a wealth of figures."[258] The "wealth of figures" to which the biographer refers can be found below the cornice that supports the sculptures of Hercules and Samson. Uniting these almost life-size figures in both affect and meaning is a large relief depicting classical marine figures as they cavort amongst spiraling, stylized waves. Unsurprisingly, scholars have identified multiple artists' hands in this relief. Giuliano da Sangallo is thought to have carved the main panel.[259] What might seem upon first glance to be a rather generic scene of marine deities and fanciful

[257] Pellecchia, "From Aesop's Fables to the 'Kalila Wa-Dimna'," 142-143. See especially footnote 33, in which she explains one such high-risk business investment.
[258] Giorgio Vasari, G. C. De Vere , and Philip J. Jacks, *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 189.
[259] Campigli, "Il Camino di Palazzo Gondi," 134.

creatures in an unidentifiable waterscape should instead be read as a very pointed reference to the city's own major waterway – the Arno river. This lively scene provides the key for discerning the symbolic resonance of the strongmen that surmount the fireplace so lauded by Giorgio Vasari. Reminiscent of Mantegna's virtuosic engraving, *Battle of the Sea Gods*, Giuliano da Sangallo's design may have been inspired by both ancient and contemporary sources available in Florence at this time. Sarcophagi of classical origins often featured nereids and sea monsters who represented joyful visions of happiness and good fortune, while marine themes in ancient Roman homes could denote the abundance of the sea.[260] Similarly, Gondi's choice of theme celebrates the abundance of wealth made possible by Florence's signature waterway – the Arno.

The most significant figures in this scene are those positioned in the near center. (Fig. 3.12) Both Hercules and Samson are referenced in the scene by figures playfully displaying their respective attributes. On the left side of the central group is a figure turned slightly to the right so that he appears to be moving parallel to the picture plane. Draped over his right arm is a lion skin. Facing the viewer is a figure holding the jawbone of an ass, the preferred weapon of Samson, whose own presence upon the mantle of the fireplace is devoid of this attribute in favor of the column. To the river god's right is another male figure, whose left arm cradles the flaming cornucopia found in Giuliano Gondi's sigil. The appearance of the cornucopia in the river can be read symbolically as a reference to Giuliano, and allegorically as the horn of plenty, which was the result of Hercules' efforts against the river god. This visual sign also reminds viewers that the mythological strongman had, through this labor, created the favorable conditions that enabled the land surrounding the river to provide its rich bounty, as noted by Strabo in his *Geographia*. This,

[260] Paul Zanker and Björn Christian Ewald, *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*, Trans. Julia Slater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 122; 125-126.

then, can be read as a metaphor for Gondi's relationship to the river Arno, which provided the means to ferry his wares to merchant ships waiting on the coast, from which point they would be distributed all over Europe.

Although a unique use of Herculean iconography, there was at least one visual precedent in the signorial palace. Above a door that was constructed to allow passage between the Udienza and the Sala dei Gigli as a result of the newly created wall that had been built to make two, rather than one, room in 1481, Rubinstein has pointed out that Giuliano da Maiano and Francione (the architects of the wall, the door, and its surrounding friezes) included a number of sea creatures with a figure of Hercules gliding over the waves on a chariot pulled by two sea creatures.[261] (Fig. 3.13) While this seems a bit of an interesting identification, because the only commonly used attribute that would remind the viewer that this was Hercules is the club, it is clear that Gondi has extended the subject and made the identification with Hercules certain in his commission of the fireplace in his palace.

3.7 Ancient Accounts of Hercules and the Cornucopia

The rationale for linking the figure of Hercules to notions of prosperity, wealth, and abundance can be found in numerous accounts by historians and mythographers known in the Renaissance. Ovid's account of the hero's competition with Achelous for the hand of the beautiful Deianira, daughter of a king, is the most detailed and was likely the most familiar to Gondi. Told from the perspective of the vanquished river god while dining with Theseus (another hero with whom Hercules is often linked, and whose father was Neptune), the events that transpired directly before Hercules married the princess are recalled in book IX of the *Metamorphoses.* Sensing that Hercules has outmaneuvered him in the wrestling match, Achelous

[261] Nicolai Rubinstein, "Classical Themes in the Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 33–34.

draws upon his stores of magic to transform himself into first a snake (no obstacle for Hercules) and then a bull. In a decisive move that ensures his status as victor, Hercules severs the horn from the river god's forehead. The Naiades fill it with fruits and flowers, effectively transforming the horn into a cornucopia associated with abundance. As Achelous finishes his account of the events, a horn overflowing with fruits and vegetables is brought to the table by a nymph costumed as Diana.

Philostratus the Younger provides an ekphrasis of this minor labor of Hercules, as depicted in an imagined painting, in his *Imagines*.[262] In his description, he relates the concept of abundance by equating the cornucopia with the traditional exchange of gifts during marriage rituals. Philostratus writes that, after successfully divesting Achelous, now in bull form, of his right horn, "Herakles, full of joy at his deed, looks at Deianira and throwing his club on the ground holds out to her the horn of Acheloüs as his nuptial gift."[263] At no time was the apparent wealth and splendor of a Florentine family more on view in a public forum than when new marriage alliances were celebrated. Strabo's sixth-century version of the horn of plenty would also have been well known in Quattrocento Florence. In the second part of his famous *Geographia*, Strabo posits that the notion of abundance and its representation as a cornucopia was identified with Hercules' because he made the land around the River Achelous arable when he diverted its flow and, subsequently, drained the surrounding lands that had been flooded.[264] Petrarch, too, relates these events in the biographical entry for Hercules in his *On Famous Men*, though he apologizes for their brief mention, since it would take far too long to relate all the

[262] Philostratus the Elder, Philostratus the Younger, Callistratus, *Philostratus the Elder, Imagines. Philostratus the Younger, Imagines. Callistratus, Descriptions,* Translated by Arthur Fairbanks, Loeb Classical Library 256. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1.4, 302-305.
[263] Philostratus et al., *Imagines,* 1.4, 305.
[264] Strabo, Hans C. Hamilton, and William Falconer, *The Geography of Strabo*, Vol. 2 (London: H.G. Bohn, 1854), 170.

accomplishments of Hercules. In his account, he dwells first on the hero's efforts to divert the river and then details his battle with the river god, whose horn he broke from his face and dedicated to abundance.[265]

The close connection of Hercules with the idea of abundance in the visual realm of Florence has not yet been explored by scholars, but this is another important key to deciphering how Renaissance Florentines would have understood and related to Hercules. The cornucopia, a major attribute of the personified *Abbondanza* and, as Randolph has shown, of Donatello's sandstone sculpture of Dovizia (from Latin *divitiae* meaning "riches" or "wealth") installed in the Mercato Vecchio in the 1420s on an ancient column, points allegorically to the ancient concept of abundance.[266] Notably, the Latin word *fructus* or fruit, as spilling from a cornucopia, was also the word for profit in Italian merchant parlance.[267] This meaning must be added to the multiple valences, some religious and others political, that Hercules had already embodied for the members of a republican city and state. While Hercules may symbolize each of these simultaneously, his appearance in private homes of the wealthy families of Florence must be seen as an individualistic means to create a personal connection to this long-revered figure—one that then served to expand the symbolic value of Hercules for the republic.

3.8 The Spinelli Palace

As was the case with the decorative program in the Gondi household, Tommaso Spinelli incorporated Herculean iconography that was visually and symbolically linked to abundance both in his city home and in his countryside retreat. (Figs. 3.14-3.15) Commissioned between

[265] "Con sua piena pace, in ogni caso, tralascerò qui di parlare delle gole di Tessaglia, dei gioghi spezzati dei monti, dei fiumi deviati, del corno reciso ad Acheloo e poi dedicato all'abbondanza…." in Francesco Petrarca and Ugo Dotti, *Gli Uomini Illustri; Vita Di Giulio* Cesare (Torino: G. Einaudi, 2007), 85, 11.12.
[266] Adrian W. B Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 21.
[267] Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 27.

1460 and 1470 for their home in the Santa Croce neighborhood, the Palazzo Spinelli *sgraffito* features Hercules doing battle with the Nemean lion. The pendant to this scene depicts Cupid preparing to release an arrow at a target outside of the picture frame in an arboreal setting. Scholars have argued that the first image cannot definitively be identified as an image of Hercules, given the lack of the hero's usual attributes, and should instead be understood as a Herculean-like wrestler engaged in battle with a beast that resembles the family's heraldic lion.[268] While the lion does appear to be more heraldic than lifelike, it is my opinion that the sgraffito should, in fact, be identified as Hercules, with no reservations. That Hercules here lacks his attributes of club and bow should not hinder this identification, since ancient sources indicated that he did not subdue the monstrous lion of Nemea with either weapon; rather, he set them aside when he realized that the only way to conquer the beast was by sheer strength alone. It was this first labor that clarified for Hercules his relationship to a divine source of power that outmatched any mortal or monster on earth. When juxtaposed with the labor unfolding to the viewer's left, Cupid with his bow and arrow on the other side serves as a playful reminder of the actual powers this seemingly benign weapon can wield when it falls into different hands. Inefficient when pitted against the tough hide of the Nemean Lion, it can nevertheless penetrate even the most protected, hardened warrior's heart when it inspires one to fall in love.

That the son of Venus appears in this context has apparently puzzled scholars over the years, perhaps due to the fact that it is rare, though not impossible, to find a direct interaction between Hercules and Cupid in ancient texts that would have been known to fifteenth-century Florentines.[269] There is, however, at least one other example that can shed light on the subject of

[268] Philip Jacks and William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 136-37.
[269] Charles R. Mack, "Building a Florentine Palace: The Palazzo Spinelli," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* (1983): 265.

this fresco, which has thus far been overlooked. This imagery can be found on an ancient cameo that once belonged to Lorenzo de' Medici, now in the Naples Archaeological Museum collections[270] (Fig. 3.16) It features Hercules in a kneeling position, with Cupid in the process of binding his arms. This particular scene is a variation of the theme of Cupid subduing Hercules, a type that does appear from time to time in ancient art (if not in classical literary accounts) and speaks to the notion that love conquers all, even the strongest of heroes.[271] Valued at 150 florins, this sort of object might have been one Tommaso Spinelli had seen for himself, because, as a successful banker and silk merchant, he enjoyed a close relationship with Florence's leading family.

On the façade of the palazzo are cornucopias rendered in sgraffito, referring to the bountiful economic fortunes Tommaso had enjoyed. (Fig. 3.17) That the visual program in its entirety includes Herculean iconography and references his role in the creation of the cornucopia as recounted by Ovid indicates the Spinelli patriarch's desire to display his economic fortunes as well as the labors he himself undertook to ensure them. Unlike Giuliano Gondi, his reference to the Medici seems more overt, since the labor depicted in the Spinelli courtyard is the same subject that was commissioned for one of the three large canvases Pollaiuolo made for the Medici. It is also known that both Tommaso Spinelli and Piero de' Medici ordered these additions to their domestic spaces at around the same time. Tommaso's reference to abundance is made even clearer by the presence of an over-door personification of Abbondanza at his villa. This figure may have resembled Donatello's Dovizia, displayed in the old market place of the city before it was lost.

---

[270]Richard Stapleford, ed., trans., *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 98.
[271] "Herakles," LIMC, vol. IV, pt. 1, 172; see for instance catalogue numbers 3432, 3433, 3437, 3438 in vol. IV, pt. 2.

3.9 The Benizzi Palace

Near the Pitti palace in the Oltrarno, the fifteenth-century palace of the Benizzi was purchased by the Guicciardini family in the early sixteenth century. While not much is known about Benizzi art patronage, at some point, a member of the family commissioned a terracotta relief of Hercules engaged in his twelfth labor of dispatching the thief Cacus. (Fig. 3.18) This work was hung directly over a fountain comprised of an open lion's mouth from which issued forth a stream of water caught below in a basin. Who exactly commissioned this work is uncertain, but of the three male members of the Benizzi family listed in the catasto of 1427,[272] I believe Antonio di Piero Benizzi is the prime candidate due to his reported wealth and noted residence. From the records, one learns that he owned cattle, though his primary trade was listed as *cambiatore*, or moneychanger. Antonio's taxable income that year was 6342 florins, substantially more than the other two Benizzi listed in the catasto. In his appendix listing the elite families of Florence, Anthony Molho notes that when both taxable and nontaxable wealth are taken into consideration, he was worth 8616 florins at the time he was registered in the 1427 catasto.[273] Of the other two Benizzi, one may have been his son, who also lived in the Nicchio district, while the other was most certainly a relative, due to the fact that he lived in the same quarter of Santo Spirito.

Additional information about the Benizzi family's splendid terracotta relief of Hercules and Cacus can be pieced together from a twentieth-century publication by Paolo Guicciardini and Emilio Dori, in which are documented the many expansions and subsequent destructions of

---

[272] *Online Catasto of 1427*. Version 1.3. Edited by David Herlihy, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, R. Burr Litchfield and Anthony Molho. [Machine readable data file based on D. Herlihy and C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Census and Property Survey of Florentine Domains in the Province of Tuscany, 1427-1480.*] Florentine Renaissance Resources/STG: Brown University, Providence, R.I., 2002.

[273] Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), 380.

the Guicciardini palazzo. When the household of the Guicciardini outgrew the confines of its original palazzo, one of the brothers, newly wed, purchased the Benizzi palazzo adjacent to his home in the early sixteenth century. With the intention of incorporating this new acquisition into their own palazzo's design, they hired an architect tasked with reconstructing the irregular façade and amending the internal layout of the two palaces so that they could be joined in a more logical fashion. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the relief was not relocated during this time, though as Guicciardini notes, it would have been advantageous for the architect's vision of a more light-filled, open space.[274] Had the wall been removed, there would then have been a more seamless transition into the garden beyond. That it continued to occupy its original position in the home must have indicated the new owner's admiration for the Herculean relief and a desire to incorporate it into their own familial identity, which had had a long and storied history in the city of Florence.

From its position on the back wall of the interior entry hall, it was the first sight that greeted visitors to the Benizzi home and could be viewed from the street when the main entrance to the palazzo stood open. The prominence of its location suggests that there were both private and public dimensions to the work, and reconstructing its symbolic aspects is important for understanding the expected response of viewers. Its significant size, at nine feet tall by just less than 9 feet wide, anticipates Bandinelli's monumental sculptural group of the same subject, created to stand opposite Michelangelo's *David* at the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio in 1534. Hercules and his battle with Cacus was a visual subject that could also be found on the façade of Giotto's campanile flanking Santa Maria del Fiore, and was one of the earliest public representations of Hercules' labors in the city of Florence. (Fig. 3.19) In that context, Hercules is

[274] Paolo Guicciardini and Emilio Dori, *Le antiche case ed il Palazzo dei Guicciardini in Firenze* (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1952), 50.

cast as the champion of moral fortitude, whose battle with the evil robber and monster, Cacus, suggested the city's own self-appointed obligation to root out internal vices and guard against external foes that might wish to see the city overcome.

Unlike the plaque adorning the campanile, however, the Benizzi relief shows Hercules in a much more threatening aspect than had been previously done. The sculptor of the Campanile relief had focused on the triumph of the hero over the monster, whose lifeless body lies prone at the feet of Hercules. The choice to depict the aftermath of the battle, with Hercules standing tall over his foe, has the effect of creating a sense of calm in the viewer, despite the victor's leonine appearance. Where once there was violence and cause for alarm, now there is a sense that justice has prevailed as a result of the virtuous actions undertaken by Florence's most famous simulacrum. Since Florence considered itself to be, collectively, the "New Hercules," this relief was geared to visitors and external foes as much as to its own citizens.

The Hercules of the Benizzi terracotta is anything but calm and collected. Depicted in the midst of violence, the hero looms over the broken body of Cacus as he methodically breaks his arm over his leg. Since a broken arm itself would not lead to a mortal wound, the viewer must here assume that Hercules' rage can at times be uncontrollable, or else that the hero simply takes pleasure in torturing the enemy of civilization, as represented by Cacus the thief. Benizzi, whose own career as a banker must have frequently put him in danger of being either taken advantage of or defrauded, may have preferred this particular labor because it could serve as a warning to those who might wish to steal from him. The patron would also have been drawn to this subject matter in an effort to assure others of his reputation as fair in economic matters, particularly because untrustworthy money-changers would likely not have received as much business as he did, which then underscored his great success in accumulating his wealth honestly.

This theme would likewise have resonated with Antonio in another, perhaps less erudite, way. Ovid explains in his *Metamorphoses* that Cacus had drawn the ire of Hercules after stealing the cattle that he had had such difficulty herding back from the monster Geryon's habitation on the island of Erythia. The long journey back with the cattle was fraught with complications for Hercules, pestered as he was by all manner of obstacles. In the end, Cacus' theft was the last straw, and the hero quickly dispensed of the fire-breathing robber, who lived in a cave on the hill that would later become Rome. Because Antonio himself owned cattle, as did many wealthy Florentines, he would have recognized the incredible labor involved in caring for them to supply his own dinner table and perhaps make some additional income by selling the best of the herd. The business of owning cattle, then as now, was indeed a Herculean labor, with disease, pregnancy, and wild animals all threatening to decimate and steal any profit that might be had or hoped for in the end (though Antonio would likely have had hired hands who oversaw this portion of his holdings in the countryside). By choosing a subject that references not only his honest dealings in his primary career, but also his secondary business venture as a cattle owner, this relief was intimately connected to the Benizzi patriarch's own view of himself as reflected in the virtue of Hercules.

Finally, there is one more level to this particular choice of imagery for the Benizzi palazzo. The most famous member of the Benizzi family was the much venerated and beloved thirteenth-century religious luminary, San Filippo. As the leader of the Servites, or Order of the Servants of Mary, San Filippo had advocated vigorously for the right of the order to continue its service in Tuscany, after Pope Innocent V declared that they be disbanded. Due to his efforts, the order was allowed to continue its work during a time when all mendicant groups not approved by the papacy were being suppressed. He was later beatified and eventually canonized in the

seventeenth century, and his virtuous endeavors in life were memorialized in a group of frescoes painted by Andrea del Sarto in the Church of Santissima Annunziata in Florence.

From the Guicciardini records of the expansion of their palace, it is known that the Benizzi palace they acquired was constructed at least in the thirteenth century, and appears to have belonged to the family even then, serving as the birthplace in 1233 and childhood home of San Filippo Benizzi.[275] Supporting evidence of this comes from the columns dating to the Duecento that were in evidence when the architect chosen by the Guicciardini began to merge the two structures.[276] That the Herculean labor chosen for depiction in this context only appeared in one other public site—the spiritual center of Florence on the façade of the Campanile—suggests that Antonio Benizzi also desired to establish a visual link, however subtle, between his famous ancestor and the modern iteration of his household. In the guise of Christian fortitude, Hercules in the act of killing Cacus would then refer to the equal fortitude displayed by San Filippo Benizzi in his battle with the papacy, when he labored to preserve the Servite Order.

Other scholars have assumed that the Herculean iconography employed by families like the Benizzi must always first be understood as visually referencing their alliance with the Medici. While this may be true in some cases, as it is at least in part with the Spinelli commission, it is important to point out that in these other instances the subject matter and particular labors of Hercules chosen for depiction were entirely different from the ones selected by the Medici. For the Medici, Pollaiuolo had depicted Hercules battling the lion of Nemea, the Hydra of Lerna, and the son of the earth goddess, Antaeus. In contrast, Antonio Benizzi selected Hercules overcoming Cacus, and Gondi created a complicated seascape that only had one other known counterpart in the Palazzo Vecchio. It is significant that so many of these Herculean

[275] Guicciardini and Dori, *Le antiche case,* 119, footnote 34.
[276] Guicciardini and Dori, *Le antiche case,* 50.

iconographic programs use the hero's labors to advertise their own efforts in securing the familial patrimony by enhancing their economic status. In so doing, they connect their own labors as citizens of Florence to the city that provided the conditions for such abundance, as well as the hurdles, which had to be overcome in order to prevail. These examples enable us to modify how we understand the role of Hercules in the visual culture of Florence, without supplanting his status as the symbolic protector and simulacrum for the republic.

3.10 Hercules Between Nature and Culture

The brute strength and virtue with which Hercules was endowed enabled the hero to serve as guardian of the city and the family unit, but it could also be seen in a somewhat darker light. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, widely read in the fifteenth century, Aristotle delimited the realm of virtue by setting brutishness in opposition to superhuman virtue. The former vice, he argued, was found "chiefly among the barbarians" who inhabited distant lands and were perceived to be wild and uncivilized, while the latter he characterized as a "heroic and divine kind of virtue" that was often present in those who inhabited the space between the mortal and immortal realms.[277] From this it can be surmised that not just anyone could have this kind of virtue, though they might strive for it. This very stark contrast was frequently visualized for fifteenth-century Florentine audiences in depictions of heroes doing battle with monstrous entities. In their role as creators and guardians of civilization, mythological heroes like Hercules were understood to keep enemies of civilization at bay and were thus potent symbols of the cities they protected. Depictions of Orpheus, who was heralded by Marsilio Ficino and other humanists as the bringer of culture and enlightenment, served to remind viewers of the shadowy denizens of nature that lurked and threatened the boundaries of their communities.

[277] Aristotle, J. L. Ackrill, W. D. Ross, and J. O. Urmson. *The Nicomachean Ethics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980: 7.1.

Although depictions of embattled heroes are consonant with Aristotle's discussion of virtue in placing the brutish and the superhumanly virtuous on either end of a spectrum, I argue that these types of figures also mirrored one another in significant ways. One can conclude much about the Renaissance notion of virtue from how these oppositions were visually constructed. In the section that follows, I will consider certain congruencies between the hero Hercules and his monstrous enemies as represented in the visual culture of Quattrocento Florence.

Depictions of Hercules overcoming the giant Antaeus and the Lernaean Hydra, as well as the frequent iconographic and narrative conflation of Hercules with a figure known as the wild man will serve as the main examples, as they provide an opportunity to consider the wider implications of such iconographic elision for an early Renaissance viewer. The visual relationships here discerned bring into relief contemporary ideas of virtue as reflected in the ambiguous status of monsters and heroes, while, at the same time, foregrounding the unstable boundary that separated nature from culture in fifteenth-century Florentine thought.

3.11 Boundaries

The ambiguity that defines the nature of boundaries, both imagined and real, has long been a well-spring of inspiration for poets and philosophers, for none more than for those who wrote of the trials that mythological heroes were compelled to undergo in their journeys. Commenting on the nature of these types of spaces and their inhabitants, the anthropologist Victor Turner tells us in his important study of the ritual process that "The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ('threshold people') are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of

classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[278]

In other words, the state of liminality, however unstable or nebulous, is also replete with transformative possibilities for those who find themselves at such thresholds. This concept is made manifest in the mythological hero, whose own nature might at times more closely resemble that of the monster he must overcome than a virtuous champion. As explored in the previous chapter, the Renaissance humanist Cristoforo Landino[279] provides an allegorical reading of Aeneas's journey from Troy to Italy as the progress of a soul moving from a life of base pleasure to one of active, civic service before eventually achieving a state of ideal virtue. For Landino and his students, the journey between the fallen city of Troy and the establishment of a new lineage that will result in the founding of Rome is the space of liminality for Virgil's hero. Within this unpredictable environ—in which Aeneas lands on hostile islands, engages in an extra-marital affair with the queen of Carthage, journeys into the underworld, and becomes embroiled in battle with a people who already live on the Italian peninsula —the nature of Aeneas is transformed not once, but twice.

Marsilio Ficino's platonic interpretation of Orpheus' famous musical talents, with which the hero brought together beasts, rocks, and trees in peaceable harmony, was an allegory for the origins of civilization, a point that will be further examined in the next chapter. It served to explain the inherent differences between humans who lived like beasts in wild nature and those who formed a civil society under a common system of

[278] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969), 95.
[279] See Ettlinger, "Hercules Florentinus," 136.

governance. In this, Ficino echoed Marsilius, the Paduan author of a controversial political treatise entitled *Defensor pacis*, who had already in 1324 defined heroes as those individuals who "were named rulers on account of their exceeding virtues and beneficial deeds, in that they brought together a scattered multitude and assembled it into a civil community, or they freed the region of oppressors by fighting and strength of arms."[280] The latter definition certainly applies to the heroic figure of Hercules, whose major and minor labors consisted of ridding the countryside of all those who threatened to upend societal norms.

3.12 Hercules and Antaeus

In a small work of sculpture noted in a sixteenth-century inventory of the Medici, the Florentine artist Antonio del Pollaiuolo gave visual form to the notion that the boundary between heroic virtue and monstrous brutishness was porous. (Fig. 3.20) Meant to be rotated and viewed from all sides, the viewer sees Hercules strain in his efforts to keep the giant Antaeus aloft. In relating this particular feat, the Roman poet Ovid explains that the hero realized during the first bouts of the struggle that the monster drew its source of inhuman strength from his mother, the earth. This gave Hercules the idea that in order to defeat him, he must deny Antaeus contact with this ready source of natural energy.

Moving beyond the typically heroic pose of a nude male figure with chiseled muscles and an upright body, Pollaiuolo depicts a hero who is contorted and misshapen as he channels his destructive strength to overcome the son of Gaia.[281] (Fig. 3.21). Especially

---

[280] Marsilius, Alan Gewirth, and Cary J. Nederman. *Defensor pacis*. Records of Western Civilization. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 31.

[281] Simons, "Hercules in Italian Renaissance Art," 640. Simons comments on Hercules' posture as he battles Antaeus in the small panel by Antonio Pollaiuolo considered to have been a miniature version of the larger canvas commissioned for the Medici palace, the latter of which is no longer extant. She characterizes Hercules in the midst of struggle as being "as bestial as his partner…"

noteworthy is the degree to which his back is being pulled down as he lifts Antaeus. While this extreme contortion demonstrates the extent to which the hero is physically strained in this contest, the exaggerated body position indicates a spasm—a paroxysm of strength—that morphs the heroic body into a grotesque mass of contorted musculature. Interestingly, the artist has fashioned for Antaeus, on the other hand, a beautiful, smooth body that is virtually indistinguishable in physique from the heroic ideal. With a muscular torso and proportional limbs, the only visual indication that signals that this figure is in fact a monster is its terrible, gaping mouth.

To explain the concept of proportion, Leon Battista Alberti employs the example of the struggle between Hercules and Antaeus in his influential treatise on painting. He advises that when preparing the design to be painted, the artist must take care to ensure that there is a proper proportional relationship between figures. He posits that just as Hercules, with his over-sized body, should be painted in proportion to the significantly smaller Evander, the founder of a city in Italy, so, too, should the giant Antaeus be depicted in proportion to Hercules, whose frame, though larger than that of a normal man, was nevertheless smaller than the monster he battled.[282] Rather than follow these precepts, we see here that Pollaiuolo has de-emphasized the monster's size. This results in convincing the viewer that Hercules and Antaeus are evenly matched in form, undermining the sense that our hero is battling a monster at all. It might just as easily be Hercules, with his grimacing face and bulging veins who is the monster, wrapping his

[282] Leon Battista Alberti, Martin Kemp, and Cecil Grayson, *On Painting* (London: Penguin, 1991), 50. "A very small man is proportional to a very large one; for there was the same proportion of span to stride, and of foot to the remaining parts of the body in Evander as there was in Hercules, whom Gellius conjectures was taller and bigger than other men. Yet, the proportion of the limbs of Hercules was no different from that of the body of the giant Antaeus, since the symmetry from the hand to the elbow, and the elbow to the head, and all the other members, corresponded in both in similar ratio." 1. 15.

arms tightly around the frame of a youthful wrestler.

To illustrate how Pollaiuolo might have approached his sculptural design differently, it is instructive to look at a figure of Hercules on horseback, created by another favored artist of the Medici circle. (Fig. 3.22) Bertoldo di Giovanni's interpretation of the hero on horseback is an interesting case. What is striking about this sculpture, and perhaps hard to put one's finger on initially, is Hercules' size in proportion to the horse. Some scholars have suggested that the size disparity between rider and mount was intended to serve as a comic presentation of the hero.[283] While this may certainly have been one type of viewer response, the fact that Hercules dwarfs the horse upon which he rides is in keeping with literary sources that describe his stature as larger-than-mortal. The horse is stocky, but still appears too small to bear Hercules' weight for long. Turning once again to the Pollaiuolo sculpture, we see that Pollaiuolo has depicted the very moment Hercules managed to crush the giant's ribs together in order to fatally pierce his liver. (Figs. 3.20-3.21). Although evenly matched in stature to Antaeus, the hero's inner nature and strength is depicted as one that rivals and eventually dominates the monster's own. Heroic nature and monstrous constitution are presented here in a comparison that suggests their psychological congruencies.

Coluccio Salutati, who was chancellor of Florence, interpreted this struggle with Antaeus as that of Hercules battling to overcome his own vices. For this allegory, Salutati focused in particular on the etymological origins of Antaeus' name, explaining that it came from the Greek "anti," which was a contronym that could signify both opposition and congruency. Hercules might here be understood as a monster-hero, attempting to rid

[283] James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 144.

himself of his own baser nature.[284]

Indeed, Pollaiuolo has depicted two entities that echo one another in form and in emotional response. They appear to the viewer to be inextricably intertwined from all angles, prompting the viewer to contemplate the nature of their relationship. They might be understood as threshold figures then, both betwixt and between the Aristotelian states of brutishness and super-human virtue.

3.13 Hercules and the Lernaean Hydra

Pollaiuolo continues this visual theme in his treatment of Hercules battling the Hydra in his second labor. (Fig. 3.23) In written accounts, the Hydra was described as being a ferocious beast with either nine or one hundred heads who dwelled in the swampy marshes near the city of Lerna in the Argolid.[285] Hercules quickly realized that for each head he managed to sever with his sword, two grew in its place. This increasingly dangerous situation was remedied when the hero was joined by his nephew and servant Iolaus, who cauterized the stumps with a burning torch as soon as the heads had been removed. Most visual depictions of this particular struggle in the fifteenth century seem to give all the credit to the hero himself, as Iolaus is rarely, if ever, represented.[286]

This particular representation, quite small but replete with exceptional detail, is thought to have been painted by Pollaiuolo after the no-longer extant canvases of the labors he created for the Medici. Hercules here appears to fly through the air, though his left foot is firmly planted on the rocky ground. The Arno river valley that stretches far

[284] Salutati writes that it "not only signifies, as the saying is, 'contrary' but in fact also means 'similar' or 'equal'." For this quote, see the discussion in Michael A. Jacobsen, "A Note on the Iconography of Hercules and Antaeus in Quattrocento Florence." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 1.1 (1981): 17.
[285] Apollodorus and James George Frazer, *The Library* (London: W. Heinemann, 1963), 2.5.2. Apollodorus describes the hydra with nine heads (eight mortal and one immortal), far fewer than Ovid's claim of 100.
[286] For Iolaus in written accounts, see Apollodorus and Frazer, *The Library*, 2.5.2. and Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1)* Trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod, Loeb Classical Library 188 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 2.46.6.

into the distance, and the billowing Nemean lion skin he has tied around his waist, with hind paws appearing to spring forward, add to this effect.[287] His right arm is raised high in the air as he brandishes his club, while his right leg extends behind him, propelling him into the attack. The remaining hydra heads swirl and hiss, their fanged mouths opened wide in angry dismay as Hercules grasps one tightly by the neck in his left hand. (Fig. 3.24) His face mirrors the expressions of his foe, and one notes that the artist here, by rendering the toothy grimace of Hercules, invites a comparison between the hero's affect and that of the Hydra. In another visual parallel, the tail of Hercules' lion skin twitches sinuously behind him as if alive, reflecting the curving necks and nether tentacles of the serpent he fights. In the midst of this dangerous task, Hercules is visually transformed into the monstrous Nemean lion. (Fig. 3.25) The relationship of the pelt to the hero's body—with its ferocious jaws enveloping the whole of Hercules' head, and the hind legs tied securely around his waist—visually elides the hero's masculinity with the preternatural strength of the lion. This indicates once again that the boundary between brutishness and super-human virtue was considered to be a difference of degrees.

The ambiguous status of Hercules' heroic virtue is delineated even more emphatically in a couple of prints made after Pollaiuolo's representation. (Fig. 3.26) In a print by Robetta, which is a reverse of Pollaiuolo's design, the mane of the lion merges seamlessly with the hair of the hero. The lion's open mouth here is an effective substitute for Pollaiuolo's depiction of Hercules' own open mouth, essentially swallowing the hero's own nature and physicality all the more fully. (Fig. 3.27) Rather than depict Hercules gripping the neck of the Hydra, Robetta has engraved a contorted hand that curls

[287] Luba Freedman,"The Arno Valley Landscape in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Painting," *Viator* 44.2 (2013): 201-242.

menacingly, visually quoting the Hydra's own up-lifted claw. (Fig. 3.28)

That Hercules in these images not only mirrors the hydra, but is physically transformed into the beastly lion as he masters his foe, is particularly poignant, since the Hydra and Lion were of the same parentage. The fact that Hercules' nature could be visualized as similar or congruous with the monstrous is perhaps the very reason why a German priest, marooned in Venice for a month during his travels, had reason to complain about the confusion people faced when seeing such imagery. Upon spotting an amalgamation of pagan and Christian motifs in the tomb of the doge Pietro Mocenigo, he lamented, "There I saw in our church next to the door on the right side, in the very rich tomb of a certain doge, the carved image of Hercules, in that form in which they present him as having fought, but wearing the skin of a lion which he had killed instead of a cloak, and in combat with the hydra, a horrible monster, which had seven heads so that there with their bodies naked, with swords and pikes in their hands, and shields hanging from their necks, and no cuirass or breastplate or helmet, […] are figures of idols [. . .] the simple people think they are images of saints, and revere Hercules, thinking him Samson […]."[288] The conflation of Hercules and Samson was quite common at this time, as can be noted in the example of the Gondi fireplace figures examined above, but Hercules' battle with the Hydra might also have put the viewer in mind of the Archangel Michael, whose battle with the dragon was described in the book of Revelations.[289]

Each of these images also brings to the fore the division between nature and culture, as well as the Aristotelian spectrum of vice and virtue in Quattrocento thought. Though in ancient accounts Hercules battles the Hydra in the marshy swamps that border

[288] Friar Felix Schmitt, *Evagatorium*, 3 vols., 1843-49, Vol. 2, 424; Creighton Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 155.
[289] Rev. 12:7, KJV.

the city, Pollaiuolo has dispensed almost entirely with depicting the city in the background. (Fig. 3.23) This struggle, for Pollaiuolo and his viewers, occurs well outside the bounds of civilization, with only vague references to a city far in the distance behind the hero. This particular placement of the struggle, then, serves to make a temporal statement, pointing back in time to the days before humans had come together to form cities in such multitudes. Robetta, on the other hand, has dotted his landscape with more visible clusters of buildings that together indicate little islands of civilization in the vast river valley. (Fig. 3.26) These treatments, especially Robetta's reworking of Pollaiuolo's composition, would have served as a reminder that the brutish occupants associated with basest nature do not necessarily live so far away from city walls as to be harmless to those who live within. Shadowy denizens of the natural world lurk and threaten the boundaries of their communities.

3.14 Hercules and the Wild Man – Nature vs. Culture

Also pointing to the liminal, sometimes porous, spaces that separated wild nature from civilized culture in humanist discourse, while at the same time highlighting the murky degrees between Aristotle's brutish vice and superhuman virtue is the visual elision of Hercules with the wild man. (Fig. 3.29) The similarities of Hercules and the wild man, a figure that emerged from medieval folklore, served to remind viewers of the brutish behaviors that the mythological hero was capable of exhibiting. Scholars of anthropology and folklore have traced the medieval and Renaissance wild man back to ancient conceptions of "monstrous races" who lived beyond the borders of even the barbarians, so-called because the languages they spoke sounded like babbling to Greek ears.[290] The

[290] Herodotus and A. D. Godley, *The Histories* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1920). In the preface to book one, Herodotus distinguishes between the deeds of the Greeks, and those of non-Greeks, whom he calls

wild man was elusive, remained apart from society, and lived according to the laws of nature rather than those that governed society. In the medieval era, the wild man underwent numerous transformations in character, but even as he became more defined as an entity and in his nature, he began to assume numerous, conflicting, guises. Positioned at the boundaries of civilized society, wild men eventually came to connote both negative and positive traits. Their liminal and ambiguous natures served to reinforce societal norms, and could therefore represent the dangers of the uncivilized world, as made manifest in the surrounding forests and hills, or a bittersweet nostalgia for a time before the stresses of civilization had taken their toll.

The mythic similarities between Hercules and the wild man were many, and help to illuminate why certain iconographic similarities arose. Their shared attributes and traits as represented in visual culture have been noted in passing by just a few art historians, who generally consider it to be a curiosity. Though accounts of the wild man grew and changed over time, there were characteristics that remained somewhat constant in the tales. First, the wild man was generally considered to be much larger than a human man, indeed he was often described as a giant in stature, whose immense strength matched his over-sized proportions. Like the wild man, Hercules' most consistent physical endowments according to ancient writers were his incredible size and his muscular strength. With these god-like traits, he overwhelmed monsters and vanquished evil tyrants. In order to make the best or most effective use of his menacing physicality, he also had a number of weapons at his disposal, as previously noted. The one he most consistently relied upon one was his knotty pine club.

The wild man was covered in shaggy hair, though many accounts maintained that

---

barbarians.

while he indeed appeared hairy, this was because he wore the pelts of animals he had killed in order to protect himself from the elements. In this, the wild man is once again comparable to Hercules, whose defeat of the vicious Nemean lion provided him with a protective pelt that he wore as a defensive shield in his labors.

Both the wild man and Hercules were known for their irascible personalities and easily flared tempers. In wild-man lore, the creature crossed into populated areas only to attack innocent people. In these instances, he might carry away their children, their women, and generally create havoc, as seen in a badly damaged print by the Florentine engraver, Baccio Baldini. (Fig. 3.30) In this print, a group of nobles is hunting down wild men, who have absconded with a human child and left the parents with a changeling. The hairy legs of the wild man can be identified on the left, along with impression of another, who holds the human child. Both are running from the people in pursuit. (Fig. 3.31) The difference in stances is telling, as the knight is standing upright, which indicates his moral superiority, while the wild people crouch low as they attempt their escape. Similar to the wild man, Hercules was capable of succumbing to incredible fits of anger, and while his temper was often directed at deserving foes, he was nevertheless also prone to attacking innocent people, including a gruesome episode, in which he killed his wife Megara and their two sons in the throes of madness. Like the wild man, Hercules had a penchant for indulging in vices. He drank too heavily and gave in to libidinous urges frequently. In this, hero and monster exhibit signs of irrational behavior, guided by bestial appetites rather than by sound reason. Finally, both the wild man and Hercules often operated on the outskirts of civilization. That the hero's battles happened at the margins or far beyond the cultured air of the city was frequently represented in fifteenth-century visual culture, a

point similarly underscored in Pollaiuiolo's small painting of Hercules subduing the Hydra.

The wild man's existence was used in the medieval period to explain the important functions and benefits of living together in an organized society. By this same token, it was a reminder that the laws that governed a prosperous society held no dominion over the natural, untamed world. Though the world beyond civilization's boundaries could be an unpredictable, terrifying place, also wrapped up in this nature versus culture dichotomy was a sense of nostalgia for a time that had long passed from memory.[291] A yearning for the simplicity of life before civic duty and other heavy responsibilities encroached is a common theme in contemporary Florentine poetry.

In this poetic trope, an upstanding, educated citizen ventures into the countryside to escape his lot in life, if only for brief moments.[292] Contemplating his purpose somewhat remorsefully, he soon happens across a shepherd-musician. Overcome by the beauty of the rustic and untamed forest and the corresponding lifestyle exemplified by the languid country-dweller strumming his lyre, the wayward city man opines that the shepherd, unlike the civic-minded Florentine, is lucky to be without such high-minded cares. After a somewhat lengthy comparison of the two kinds of lives, the city man bids his new friend farewell. He has realized that civilized society is superior after all, but he much enjoyed his sojourn into the wilderness beyond the walls. As in this example, the concept of untamed nature could also then be positive, connoting fruitfulness, bounty, and a return to simplicity. It would thus be reductive to see the figure of the wild man as having a fixed

[291] Timothy Husband and Gloria Gilmore-House, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 5, 15-16.
[292] Lorenzo de' Medici and Jon Thiem, "The Supreme Good," *Lorenzo de' Medici: Selected Poems and Prose* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 65-77.

association as a negative exemplar. Viewers might instead understand him as a figure that helps to underscore a much-needed balance between two worlds.

According to the Florentine viewer's perspective, Hercules, too, performed his labors in the farthest reaches of the world. Most of his major deeds, as the ancient historians, poets, and playwrights relate, were accomplished in Greece, though our strong man also wandered about the continents of Africa and Asia in many accounts. Renaissance audiences were fascinated with the details of these travels, as the faraway lands of uncertain inhabitants still intimidated and awed early modern society. As such, both Hercules and the wild man were threshold figures in the early Renaissance imagination. They each occupied and operated within spaces that were either not possible to access or otherwise not easily traversed by the mere mortal.

In enumerating the similarities between Hercules and the wild man, it is also important to remember that Renaissance Florentines would certainly have understood the differences between these two figures, though the iconography itself might not always be easily read. The conflation of these two entities is particularly common in heraldic imagery, in which a hairy, unkempt giant of a figure is often depicted, holding the familial shield while brandishing a club. (Fig. 3.32) This was true in Florence as well as in other parts of Italy and northern Europe from the early medieval period, but it is perhaps not surprising that in the Florentine Republic, which since the early thirteenth century had claimed as its official seal an image of the watchful Hercules, images of the wild man might have easily been identified as Hercules.

Why the wild man became so closely associated with heraldry from the fifteenth century onward is not entirely clear, but his occupation of this liminal space, as protector

of the familial structure, echoes the placement of Hercules on the facades of churches like Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, where he mediated between the secular and spiritual realms, and also retained political valences as a symbol of the city. To take this back even further, wild men frequently appeared on the facades of churches in France, Germany, and even Italy, from as early as the twelfth century. For instance, a fourteenth-century depiction of the wild man brandishing a club and shield in an attempt to ward off the arrows being shot at him by a centaur appears in the decoration of the main doors of the Florentine Cathedral. (Fig. 3.29) Though considered to be lewd and uncivilized, the wild man's super human strength also made him a good candidate to serve an apotropaic function upon the family's armorial shields.[293]

Two examples that were prominently positioned on the walls of the Bargello's courtyard in Florence from the first half of the fifteenth century were the arms of Carlo di Ludovico Melati,[294] who became the Podestà of Florence in January of 1421, and those of Niccolò Porcinari, who was elected to this office in August of 1440.[295] (Figs. 3.33-3.34) Neither of the arms can be traced to an individual artist or workshop, but Niccolò's has been identified as in the style of the Florentine artist Buggiano, whose representations of Hercules can also be seen on the Santa Maria del Fiore façade.

In both of these examples, the figures function as guardians of the escutcheon, rather than as emblems within the arms. Sitting atop helmets that sprout vines and

[293] Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, 177–178; He sees the wild man has having a talismanic effect in their role as shield supporter. Bernheimer has pointed out that the appearance of the wild man as the protector of family arms did not entirely make sense in the way that figures like St. Michael, angels, and others did, partly because he was often characterized as lewd and uncivilized. Yet, he was also famed for his superhuman strength, as Bernheimer further writes, which does provide the creature some legitimacy in this role.
[294] Or Lapi or Api, and later Condulmari, of Rimini.
[295] Museo nazionale del Bargello (Florence, Italy) and Francesca Fumi Cambi Gado, *Stemmi nel Museo nazionale del Bargello* (Firenze: Associazione amici del Bargello, 1993); For the former, see plate 65 and for the latter, see plate 76. Porcinari hailed from L'Aquila.

greenery, and positioned over the shields with the individual stemmi of each Podestà, much in the tradition of ceremonial and jousting helmets still preserved at the Bardini Museum in Florence, are two figures who are definitively identified in the Bargello catalogue as representations of Hercules.[296] While this designation is certainly an apt characterization of what the artists have described, I propose that these figures are instead representations of the wild man, whose visual relationship to Hercules would no doubt have been noted by Florentine audiences. For the curators of the Bargello collection of armorial shields, the fact that both heraldic figures hold a club of some sort is reason enough to consider these to be representations of Hercules. A closer examination, in light of our earlier ethnography of the wild man and his relationship to Hercules, along with what we know about the wild man's important role as protector in heraldry, yields a more multi-faceted result.

In the earlier armorial relief, originally located on the north wall of the loggia, it is possible to make out an often overlooked, though prominent, layer of hair covering the arms, torso, back, and legs of "Hercules". (Fig. 3.35) This hirsute visual characterization of "Hercules" brings to mind the description of the wild man frequently provided in the literature and folklore of the Middle Ages. His face is heavily bearded, an attribute that the artist has indicated using wavy stylistic lines, reminiscent of similar waved parallel lines used to form his beard in engravings and woodcuts that frequently circulated during this period. A wreath of leaves, most likely oak, encircles his head, while another rings his waist.

The later arms belonging to Niccolò Porcinari were once displayed on the east side

[296] Museo Nazionale del Bargello and Fumi, *Stemmi*, 44, 62. Drolleries and bestiaries often provided fodder for the armorial shields of important Florentine families and individuals from other cities who were voted into the position of Podestà of the Republic.

of the Bargello loggia. (Fig. 3.36) Also considered to be a representation of Hercules, the figure on the shield bears little resemblance to the wild man / Hercules of the Melati shield. The presence of an overabundant beard and the club are the only two characteristics shared by the figures themselves, though they are both positioned atop the ceremonial helmets. Rather than sitting astride the helmet in a manner resembling some representations of Hercules overcoming the lion, we instead see him rising from it, with his body truncated below the upper thighs. Curled around his left arm is a banner that reads: "DOMAT OMNIA VIRTUS" or "Virtue Subdues All". This may have caused viewers to recall a similar motto found on the thirteenth-century seal of Florence, which read, "HERCULEA CLAVA DOMAT FLORENCIA PRAVA," or "Florence Subdues Evil with the Club of Hercules."[297] In this armorial relief, the figure's musculature and physiognomy are carefully described. The club held in his right hand is pointed downward and takes the form of a stylized tree branch, with leafy fronds segmenting the length of the club. This is in keeping with the iconography of the wild man, whose own club could be a branch or uprooted tree, an attribute suited to a creature whose existence and identity are deeply rooted within the untamed natural world.

The close affiliation of the wild man to the realm of nature, which is evident in the surviving representations from northern Europe that generally depict the wild man within his wilderness setting, can also be traced in the representation of Hercules by Florentine artists. In three small sculptures, thought to belong together as a group perhaps intended for Ercole d'Este, Bertoldo also emphasizes the connections between the natural world, the wild man, and Hercules. Scholars generally agree that the two sculptures commonly

[297] Edward J. Olszewski, "Framing the Moral Lesson in Pollaiuolo's Hercules and Antaeus," in *Wege zum Mythos*, ed. Luba Freedman and Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2001), 71; See his footnote 5 for the history of the translation of the seal inscription.

known as the Heraldic Wild Men would have flanked the figure of Hercules on horseback, creating a constellation of Herculean associations within the group. (Figs. 3.37-3.39)

In these depictions, the artist moved beyond the wild man's more grotesque guise, and provided the figures with a classical form. As one scholar has shown, a trend in the fifteenth century began to provide a more classicizing view of the wild man, incorporating wild entities of the ancient forests that included satyrs and other Bacchic creatures. This explains Bertoldo's approach to the Frick Shield-bearer, which provides a very specific *type* of wild man for the viewer to contemplate, in keeping with the new style of sculpture that corresponded with the rise of humanism in Renaissance Florence.

Like the Melati coat of arms, the shield bearers each wear crowns of leaves on their head, and a sort of sash made of leafy vines that drapes around their shoulders and encircles their waist. (Figs. 3.37-3.38) In one hand, they hold a large, knotty club that connects them visually to Hercules. Interestingly, Hercules also appears out of his element, and indeed there are very few representations at all of the hero riding a horse at this time. (Fig. 3.39) The shield bearer in Vienna differs from his counterpart in New York in that he wears a full beard, while the latter is clean-shaven, though sporting horns and a tail. In a panel after Bertoldo's design, we see that the artist has taken the connection with Hercules even further. (Fig. 3.40) Wrapped around the wild man's shoulders is the lion skin featured so prominent in Pollaiuolo's depiction of his battle with Antaeus.

Florentines would have encountered heroes such as Hercules and creatures like Antaeus, the Hydra, and the wild man in ritual contexts, whether nuptial or religious, though documentation of wild men as participants in the fifteenth-century republic's festivities are rare. There are records that originate much later, however, in the early

seventeenth century, when the figure of the wild man was already not as popular as it had been in earlier centuries.[298] We learn that in 1616, a wild man group comprised the festive retinue of the Prince of Urbino. These creatures entered Florence and are described as "large naked creatures, whose derivation from the ancient wild man is manifested by their apparel, wreaths of leaves around their loins and around their bearded heads" and later in the procession, there were "Eight Ethiopian giants" who looked the same way but who were carrying clubs and bows with arrows.[299]

To get a better sense of what this type of spectacle might have looked like in the fifteenth century as it played out elsewhere, it is instructive to turn to festival descriptions that originated in other cities. In his *Commentaries*, for instance, Pope Pius II describes the Procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi that took place in Rome, around June 17. He marvels at the great lengths to which all of the cardinals have gone to decorate their section of the city, and, referring to himself in the third person, he points out that "While the Pope passes, a wild man leading a lion, with which he often fights, comes before him."[300] These types of festivities were recorded for posterity, as we see in a depiction from a book detailing the wedding of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona. (Fig. 3.41) In this case, a hirsute wild man fights a lion, just as Hercules did for his first labor, intent on subduing it with his club. That such figures take part in the ritual process is a key point, because in this type of context entities are positioned in a real, physical sense, within a space of liminality, betwixt and between states of being. In this capacity, they helped to mediate the anxieties that often defined spaces of uncertain valence. This is particularly

[298] Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 72.
[299] Bernheimer, *Wild Men*, 72-73.
[300] Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *The Commentaries*, Book VIII in Creighton Gilbert, *Italian Art, 1400-1500: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 215.

true for the moment when marriage rites transformed the status of and relationship between two individuals, and by extension, their extended families. The space between the natal and nuptial homes was ritually significant in the Renaissance, and thus, it is fitting that the wild man featured in festivities that marked this important transition. In particular, the wild man's penchant for abducting women might have had particular significance for a bride, whose physical passage into her nuptial home was celebrated in the form of a lively parade called the *vincolo vero*. This procession was understood as a symbolically meaningful way to work through any latent hostilities that might still exist between two families, and was envisioned as a triumph of the "abductor" or groom, in carrying off his bride.[301]

3.15 Conclusion

Together, works of art and a humanist educational curriculum that supported various readings of the heroic as they were visualized, prompted fifteenth-century Florentines to contemplate the consonant natures of heroes like Hercules and his various foes, while at the same time, praising his worth as an exemplary model for the development of moral fortitude in young and old alike. When it came to visual depictions, however, the nature of virtue was not always as straightforward as it might ostensibly seem. Indeed, one of Florence's favorite sons, Alberti, seems to have recognized the inherent contradiction that the figure of Hercules could represent, perhaps at least in part because, as the natural son of an exile, he understood the desire for virtue to be a complex matter. In his satire, *Momus*, he observes that "when she [Rumor / Fame] realized that Hercules himself was quite similar to a monster in some ways, she couldn't stop herself

[301] Brucia Witthoft, "Marriage Rituals and Marriage Chests in Quattrocento Florence," *Artibus et Historiae* (1982): 46-50.

accosting him and flinging her arms about him."[302] The humorous point Alberti makes here operates from a comparison he makes between Rumor, the hideous monster spawned from Momus' (Vice) rape of Virtue, and the valiant hero sent to subdue her. Hercules tries in vain to stop her from reaching Mount Olympus as he had been charged to do, but is instead carried along with her to the heavenly abode of the gods. Alberti seems to suggest that, were it not for his own monstrous qualities, the hero would indeed have been able to conquer Rumor, a monster whose many eyes missed nothing of note—good or bad—that occurred in the world, and whose many mouths spread both truths and falsehoods wherever she flew.

[302] Leon Battista Alberti, Sarah Knight, and Virginia Brown, *Momus* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 79.

CHAPTER 3 FIGURES

Fig. 3.1 Detail. Letter with Seal of Hercules, March 12, 1560. Carte Strozziane, series III, 115, c. 19r, Archivio di Stato, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.2 Hercules Seal, Dugento, after D. M. Manni, 1739.

Fig. 3.3 Michelangelo, *David,* 1501-04, 16’ 11” (5.16 m.) marble, Galleria dell’Accademia, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.4 Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* with the Commentary of Cristoforo Landino, 1481. Banco Rari 341, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.5 Detail of Hercules from Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* with the Commentary of Cristoforo Landino, 1481. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 341.

Fig. 3.6 Details. Top left and bottom left corners of Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* with the Commentary of Cristoforo Landino, 1481. Banco Rari 341. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.7 First page of *Inferno*, c. 14r, of Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* with the Commentary of Cristoforo Landino, 1481. Banco Rari 341. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.8 Details of lion and Hercules, c. 14r, of Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* with the Commentary of Cristoforo Landino, 1481. Banco Rari 341. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.9 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Hercules* and *Samson*, 1497-99. Fireplace of pietra forte, sculptures of terracotta, Palazzo Gondi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.10 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Hercules* and *Samson*, 1497-99. polychrome terracotta, Palazzo Gondi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.11 Giuliano da Sangallo, Detail of fireplace frieze, c. 1497-99. relief in pietra forte. Palazzo Gondi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.12 Giuliano da Sangallo, Detail of fireplace frieze, c. 1497-99. relief in pietra forte. Palazzo Gondi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.13 *Hercules*, 1481. relief. Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.14 Workshop of Bernardo Rossellino, View of *Hercules and the Lion* (left) and *Cupid* (right), ca. 1460-70. sgraffito, Palazzo Spinelli, Florence, Italy.

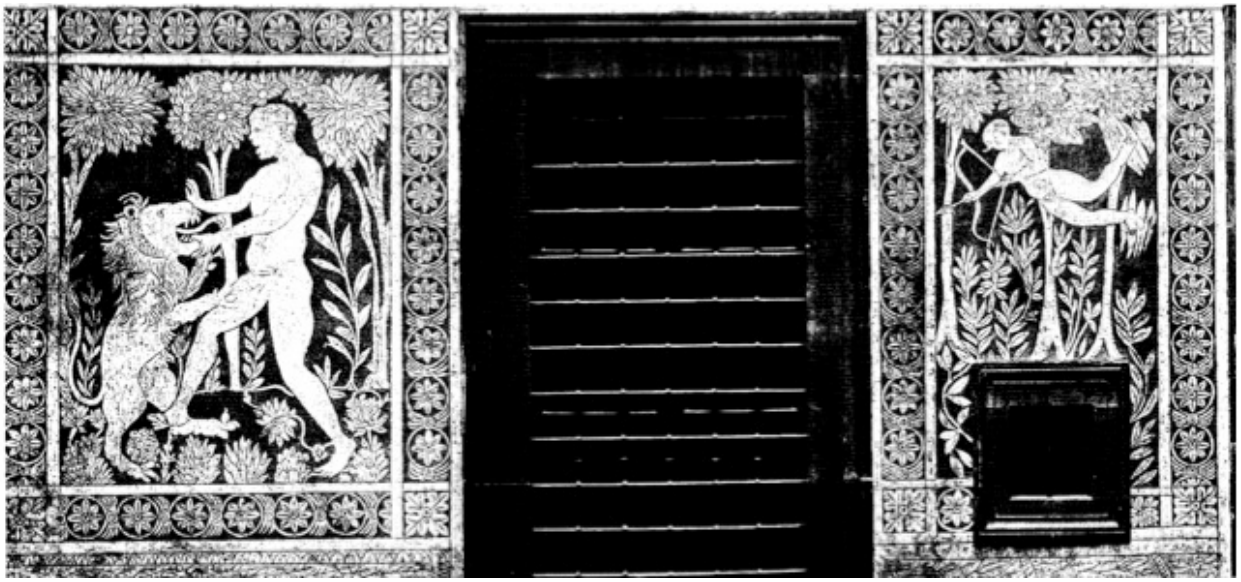

Fig. 3.15 Workshop of Bernardo Rossellino, View of *Hercules and the Lion* (left) and *Cupid* (right), ca. 1460-70. sgraffito, Palazzo Spinelli, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.16 *Hercules Subdued by Cupid*, 1st century, in the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici, 1480, Collectors Mark: LAVR.MED, Cameo, National Archaeological Museum, Naples.

Fig. 3.17 Façade of Palazzo Spinelli, Santa Croce neighborhood, Florence, Italy. Palace constructed between 1460-1470.

Fig. 3.18 School of Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Cacus*, ca. 1460. terracotta relief, Palazzo Benizzi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.19 Andrea Pisano, *Hercules and Cacus*, 1337-43. marble hexagon, 32 x 27 in. (83 x 69 cm.) Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.20 Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Antaeus*, 1470s. bronze, 17 3/4 in. (45 cm) Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.21 Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Antaeus*, 1470s. bronze, 17 3/4 in. (45 cm) Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.22 Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Hercules on Horseback*, 1470-1475. bronze, 10.6 in. (27 cm.) Galleria Estense, Modena, Italy.

Fig. 3.23 Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and the Hydra*, 1460. tempera on panel, 6.8 x 4.7 in. (17.5 X 12 cm) Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.24 Detail of Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and the Hydra*, 1460. tempera on panel, 6.8 x 4.7 in. (17.5 X 12 cm) Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.25 Detail of Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and the Hydra*, 1460. tempera on panel, 6.8 x 4.7 in. (17.5 X 12 cm) Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.26 Cristofano Robetta, After Pollaiuolo*, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna,* engraving, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 3.27 Detail of Cristofano Robetta, After Pollaiuolo*, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna,* engraving, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 3.28 Detail of Cristofano Robetta, After Pollaiuolo*, Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna,* engraving, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 3.29 Wild Man (left), Porta dei Canonici, Santa Maria dell' Fiore, 1378. Florence, Italy.

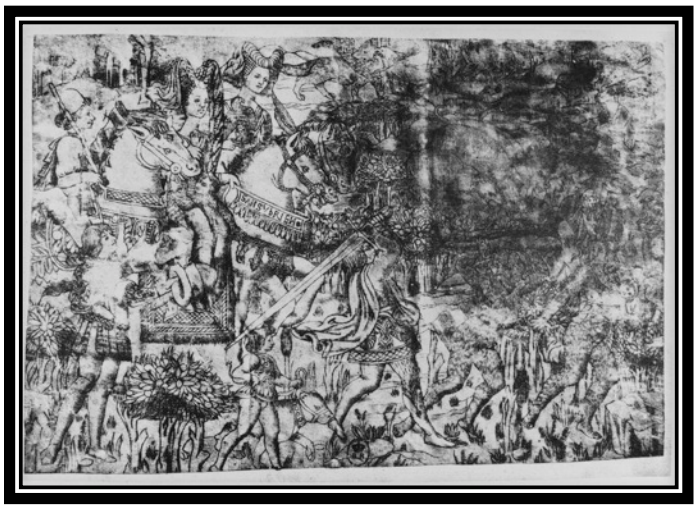

Fig. 3.30 Baccio Baldini, *Encounter of a Hunting Party with a Family of Wild Folk*, 1460-1480. Bibliotheque Nationale, Cabinet des Etampes, Paris, France.

Fig. 3.31 Detail of Baccio Baldini, *Encounter of a Hunting Party with a Family of Wild Folk*, 1460-1480. Bibliotheque Nationale, Cabinet des Etampes, Paris, France.

Fig. 3.32 Martin Schongauer, *Shield with a Greyhound, Held by a Wild Man*, engraving, University of London, London.

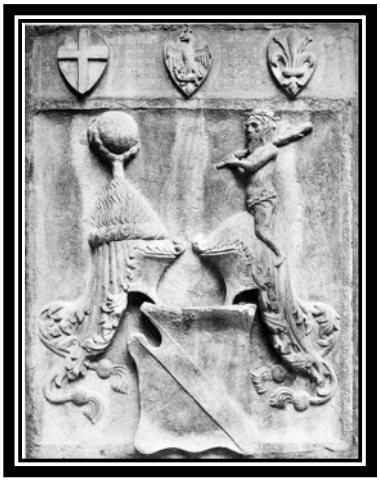

Fig. 3.33 Podestà of Florence, Coat of Arms, Carlo di Lodovico Melati of Rimini, Bargello Courtyard, 1421. relief, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.34 Podestà of Florence, Coat of Arms, Niccolò Porcinari of L'Aquila, Bargello Courtyard, 1440. relief, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.35 Detail of Podestà of Florence, Coat of Arms, Carlo di Lodovico Melati of Rimini, Bargello Courtyard, 1421. relief, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.36 Podestà of Florence, Coat of Arms, Niccolò Porcinari of L'Aquila, Bargello Courtyard, 1440. relief, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 3.37 Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Heraldic Wild Man*, ca. 1470-75. bronze with gilding, 8 3/4 in. (22.4 cm), Frick Collection, New York.

Fig. 3.38 Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Shield Bearer*, ca. 1470-75. bronze with gilding, 9 in. (23 cm) Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna.

Fig. 3.39 Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Hercules on Horseback*, ca. 1470-75. bronze, 10 1/2 in. (27 cm) Galleria Estense, Modena, Italy.

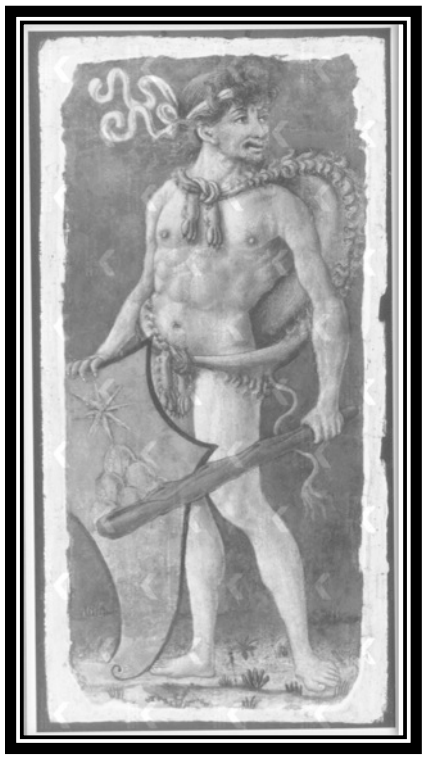

Fig. 3.40 Matteo di Giovanni, *Herculean Shield Bearer*, 1488. 13.7 x 6.7 in. (35 x 17 cm) tempera on panel, Institute for Art History, Groningen, Netherlands.

Fig. 3.41 Nicolò d'Antonio degli Agli*, The Lion and the Wild Man* from the Presentation Manuscript of *The Wedding of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona*, Urb. Lat. 899, fol. 85r. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, Italy.

CHAPTER 4

ORPHEUS AS A MODEL FOR CULTURAL VIRTUE

4.1 Introduction

If Aeneas was the hero from whose narrative a Florentine citizen might understand the benefits of establishing a balance between the active and contemplative lives, and Hercules the demi-god from whose actions one learned the central role virtuous fortitude should serve in all aspects of one's life, then Orpheus was the hero through which the cultural pursuits of poetry, music, and even love could be clarified for their inherent value and then applied in the aspiration for divine inspiration. Son of the muse Calliope and the mortal King Oeagrus of Thrace, Orpheus was a hero of great musical and poetic talents, whose divinely inspired skill brought all beasts, rocks, trees, and even water, under his mellifluous sway. Presiding over the art of epic poetry and oratorical eloquence, the musical hero's immortal mother raised him on Mount Parnassus, in the place where Apollo's other muses dwelled. Sometimes said to have been the son of Apollo, and always closely associated with the sun god in visual representations, Orpheus' adult life and tragedies are recounted by numerous ancient writers, including Virgil and Ovid, and were well known to humanists in the early Renaissance.[303]

In his later youth, the hero fell deeply in love with and married the beautiful dryad Eurydice, who was fatally wounded by a snake upon whose head she trod while escaping an unwanted suitor's advances.[304] Orpheus' journey to the underworld to save his young wife on their wedding day, too, ended tragically; the sound of her voice simply outmatched his power of

[303] Virgil and A.S. Kline, *The Georgics*, 2001. http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasgeorgics.htm, retrieved August 5, 2016, IV; Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume II: Books 9-15.* Trans. Frank Justus Miller, Rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), X.
[304] Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6,* Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Rev. by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916); See *Georgics* IV. 453-459.

will, and upon gazing back at her, she was taken from him eternally.[305] The demi-god was forced to return to earth alone, and he contented himself by playing his lyre until an unfortunate day when he was rent to pieces by maenads. According to various accounts, these vicious women had long nursed a jealousy toward him because he never deigned to look at them in the way they desired, whether for his love for Eurydice or his preference for men.[306] Apollo righted their wrongs and immortalized Orpheus as a divine prophet after his head was spotted still singing as it floated down the Hebrus River.

In the art of fifteenth-century Florence, Orpheus appears in various guises and aspects, with as many corresponding characterizations of his heroic nature. These visual representations are informed by the abundant literary interpretations of the hero as they appear in contemporary writings, commentaries, and poetry, and in those texts that survived from the ancient Greek, Roman, and early Christian eras, only to be once again eagerly mined for the stories contained within by humanists like Petrarch, Boccaccio, Coluccio Salutati, Cristoforo Landino, Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano. The contextual noise that coalesced to comprise the figure of Orpheus in literary representations often left its mark upon visual actualizations of this hero and tempered how viewers responded to him. A survey of Orpheus in the extant visual record of Florence during the Quattrocento is instructive, and prompts a number of questions about the intended visual reception of the bard during this period, as well as the circumstances and specific contexts which informed the viewing experience.

Artists of the city were commissioned to create works that featured Orpheus, both for Florentine patrons and for patrons in other locales, and these representations were sometimes

[305] Virgil, *Georgics,* IV. 485-499.
[306] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X. 79-85 & XI. 1-43 and Virgil, *Georgics*, IV. 513-527. Ovid's given reason as to why the maenads were driven into a frenzy was Orpheus' homosexuality, while Virgil explains that his death was instigated by his refusal to look at other women for love of Eurydice.

meant for private consideration, and other times available to a more differentiated public. Artworks present Orpheus as a musician or bard, sometimes surrounded by an adoring public of trees, stones, and docile animals, as an allegorical conceit, mostly with positive, but occasionally with negative, connotations, as a pained lover struck by the tragedy of losing his beloved, and as a sage and historical personage. Each of these manners of characterization, which can be detected in works by Luca della Robbia, Bertoldo di Giovanni, Baccio Baldini, and Jacopo del Sellaio, were long before inscribed in the ancient and medieval texts that survived through the centuries. They were preserved in the collective imagination of the early modern humanists, who then reinterpreted, glossed, and re-deployed the characterization of Orpheus via lectures, in musical performances, and in poetry. The humanist Marsilio Ficino was particularly instrumental in this process.

Quite frequently, Orpheus appears in the Florentine visual arts as a combination of several of these aspects and ancient roles. Thus, he is both musician and personification in the lozenge Luca della Robbia sculpted for the north side of the campanile between 1437 and 1439. (Fig. 4.1) One is prompted to conclude, following a brief survey of these various works, that, while the overall surviving representations of Orpheus appear to be meager, particularly when compared to the significantly larger visual footprint left by Hercules during roughly the same span of time, the musician was no doubt a favorite hero of Florence. If one were to expand the extant visualizations of Orpheus to include ephemeral representations or evocations of the hero, thus augmenting these numbers somewhat, we would be able to significantly enlarge the visual repertoire that contributed to the reception of Orphic themes available to the citizens of Florence at this time. It is of particular importance, for instance, to include festival performers, banquet musicians, and even humanist poets/musicians like Ficino, who was known to be an

accomplished musician on the order of Orpheus himself, in any visual reckoning of how Orpheus functioned in the Florentine urban and civic sphere. It was popular knowledge in his time that Ficino's *lira da braccio* was even decorated with an image of Orpheus, though in what type of scene was not specified.[307] That we must broaden our view of Orphic imagery can be adequately and convincingly supported when one considers that Orpheus' heroic nature was often characterized as the model for cultural pursuits in general, which encompassed both a civilizing function that explained the important role of government in Florentine society, as well as a variety of cultural and artistic pursuits, which could include rhetoric, poetry, music, and the visual arts.

To fully understand the implications of the Orpheus motif in fifteenth-century Florence and what it would have represented to the patrons for whom such works were commissioned, it is imperative to contextualize these works within overlapping spheres in which they would have operated. This case study will demonstrate that the characteristic iconography of Orpheus, as well as the wider literary dimensions of the myth, operated on multiple levels in Renaissance Florence. It had as much to do with spectacle, the senses, and a growing interest in nature and its wild inhabitants, as it did with the loftier pursuit of divine harmony, ideal love, and spiritual inspiration that was thought to be accessible through music and poetry.

4.2 Classical Origins of Orphic Imagery

The visual representation of Orpheus had enjoyed a long and rich history by the time he appeared on the side of the Florentine campanile sometime between 1437 and 1439. It is important to briefly mark this trajectory over time, because major shifts noted in the motif's

[307] John Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," in *Orpheus, the Metamorphoses of a Myth*, Ed. John Warden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 87.Though it is not known whether Orpheus was carved or painted on Ficino's wooden instrument, it seems likely to me that it would have been carved, as indicated in an extant, somewhat later, example from 1511. See Fig. 16. Warden believes it must have been painted.

ancient development provide some insight into similar changes that prompted distinctive iconographic developments of the same motif in the early Renaissance. Depictions of Orpheus proliferated widely beginning in the sixth century BCE and were found on the surface of a variety of media, including smaller, portable objects as well as large architectural elements such as walls and floors. Some of the most familiar Roman imperial era frescoes of Orpheus are still preserved in the ruins of Pompeii at the so-called House of Orpheus and the House of the Marine Venus.

The visual record maintains that Orpheus was first made the subject of decoration as the hero enlisted to help the Argonauts avoid the beautiful, but deadly music of the Sirens.[308] There are not many extant examples of this motif, but they do indicate the earliest representation of this mythological character from the late sixth to the fifth centuries BCE.[309] Following his initial entry into the realm of artistic representation during this early period, scenes depicting the musician murdered at the hands of the Thracian women appear to have been a significantly more popular rendition than the previous theme. This theme graced the sides of first Attic vases from 480-430 BCE and then South Italian vases from 430-350 BCE, and was popular again by the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.[310]

On the heels of this shift, though overlapping to some degree, comes the next phase in this theme with visual renderings often focused on the severed head of Orpheus and its capacity

---

[308] Enrique R. Panyagua, *Catalogo de Representaciones de Orfeo en el Arte Antiguo*, Vol. 2 (Salamanca: Helmántica, 1972), 88-89; Julia Ilona Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic: An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 1997), 8.

[309] *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*. 8 vols. (Zürich: Artemis, 1981). See Vol. VII, pt. 2, cat. entry 6 for this theme represented in a metope.

[310] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 8-9; Panyagua, *Catalogo de Representaciones de Orfeo…I,* 90-108, entries 7-51; *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*, Vol. VII, pt. 2, cat. entries 28-67; For Renaissance versions, see the engraving by Albrecht Dürer from 1494, *The Death of Orpheus*, Fig. 9 in Sabine Blumenröder, "Das Orpheus-Bild im 15. Jahrhundert - Musische Männer und Wilde Frauen: Ursprungsmythen und Künstlerselbstverständnis in der Malerei," *Der Orpheus-Mythos von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. (2004): 205-228.

to deliver oracles.[311] Scenes in which Orpheus' musical capabilities are prominently highlighted follow in the next development, which occurs around 450 BCE, and in these depictions the musician is seen serenading a diverse panoply of listeners including Thracian men and children, hybrid creatures including satyrs and centaurs, nymphs, and in some cases, even Muses are present.[312] The next trend in visualization featured Orpheus in the Underworld attempting to retrieve his recently deceased wife. One scholar points out that both success and failure on the part of Orpheus in rescuing Eurydice from the clutches of death were depicted, and this scene became common in funerary contexts.[313] In Florence, this particular episode in the hero's narrative is the subject of Jacopo del Sellaio's set of three *spalliere* commissioned for the nuptial suite of a newly wed couple.

Finally, the most notable shift in the iconography of Orpheus in terms of sheer proliferation can be dated to 200 BCE, after a surprising dearth of extant depictions from 300 to 200 BCE.[314] The most commonly depicted scene from this moment on becomes Orpheus enchanting, and thereby taming, the animals with his music.[315] Though indeed a variant on his earlier role as the musician to an audience of Thracians, Muses, and various exotic creatures, it is nevertheless singular in the sense that this type of scene is comprised of only species known in nature. The configuration of Orpheus surrounded by animals remains virtually unchanged, aside from the ever-increasing variety and number of creatures present, until the sixth century. Baccio

---

[311] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 8; Panyagua *Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…I,* 121-122, 134; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…II," 399-400; *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*, Vol. VII, cat. entry 68.
[312] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 8, 10-11; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…I" 108-121; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…III," 439-440; *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*, Vol. VII, cat. entries 7-26.
[313] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 8, 12-13; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…I" 122-132; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…II," 402, 408; Panyagua "Catalogo de representaciones de Orfeo…III," 444-449, 457, 460-463; *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*, Vol. VII, cat. entries 71-88
[314] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 13.
[315] *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)*, Vol. VII, cat. entries 89-196.

Baldini's two-page engraving of Orpheus charming the animals in the so-called Florentine Picture Chronicle combines aspects of both types of audiences found in ancient representations. The young bard finds himself surrounded by mythical creatures as well as a rich variety of animals known to fifteenth century viewers. (Fig. 4.13)

The renewal of the Orpheus theme in the Hellenistic era and the time of the late Roman Republic can be read against the growing interest of the populace in animals imported from other lands for purposes of display, as well as their participation in a wide array of spectacles.[316] Victorious generals and other important leaders of the Roman Republic quickly realized the potential of including a vast array of exotic animals in their triumphal processions for the purpose of staging political theater on a grand scale.[317] This inclusion was particularly effective because it was a means by which their power over other lands, as well as the symbolic subjugation of nature by culture, could be visualized and then internalized by citizens who watched from the sidelines. Processions of this kind would likely also include other elements of spectacle in which the animals were but one component.[318]

While at first exotic species were paraded before crowds lining the processional route and then were most likely kept in a leader's menagerie of assorted creatures housed on his vast estate, they were soon incorporated into arena activities in both violent and non-violent displays.[319] Though they were pitted against one another in combat from earlier in the century, Kathleen Coleman dates the first instance of animals being put on display purely for their

[316] Jesnick, *The Image of Orpheus,* 13.
[317] Katherine E. Welch, The Roman Amphitheatre: From its Origins to the Colosseum (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 17; Věra Olivová, *Sports and Games in the Ancient World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 170.
[318] Kathleen Coleman, "Ptolemy Philadelphos and the Roman Amphitheater," Roman Theater and Society ed. William Slater, E. Togo Salmon Papers I (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) 54-57, in her discussion of the Ptolemaic procession of the early third century BCE.
[319] Coleman, "Ptolemy Philadelphos and the Roman Amphitheater," 58-61.

curiosity value, without the threat of death, to the mid-first century BCE.[320] During the middle Republic, these showings of wild beasts, or *venationes*, would occur in the morning, and were subsequently followed by other games and sports in the afternoon.[321] The word *venatio* is often treated as an umbrella term in contemporary scholarship[322] under which can be grouped at least four categories of animal spectacles.

Among the different types of animal-centered shows that a spectator would have been privy to from the Republic period on were wild beast hunts, exotic animals on display, animals that were made to perform tricks and finally, the *damnatio ad bestias*, in which the criminals sentenced with capital punishment would face a gruesome death at the hands of various carnivorous creatures. Oftentimes, the criminals were dressed as mythological figures, and were made to experience a death that was similar to, or one that relied upon elements from, the original myths. As might be expected, the most popular stories enacted on the deathly stage were populated with animals, and criminals were frequently costumed as Orpheus and then ridiculed by the crowds for being unable to stop the onslaught of vicious, hungry creatures with his, in this case, woefully ineffectual lyre.[323]

Thus, the burgeoning taste for spectacle involving animals, introduced as early as 250 BCE and quickly popularized during the Imperial period of Roman history, does much to explain what factors may have contributed to the final shift in the iconography of Orpheus during the Hellenistic period. The replacement of the musician's earlier audience of Thracians and hybrid creatures with animals known to exist in nature in 200 BCE, both common and foreign, can

---

[320] Coleman, "Ptolemy Philadelphos and the Roman Amphitheater," 61.
[321] Welch, The Roman Amphitheatre, 16-17.
[322] Coleman, "Ptolemy Philadelphos and the Roman Amphitheater," 61.
[323] Martial, *Epigrams, Volume I: Spectacles, Books 1-5,* Ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 94 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), *Spectacles* 24-25; Kathleen M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades Roman Executions Staged As Mythological Enactments," *The Journal of Roman Studies,* 80 (1990): 62-63.

therefore be attributed to a growing interest in animals at this time. This is an important distinction, relevant also to understanding the popularity of the myth in later eras. The renewal of similar kinds of animal spectacles in Renaissance Florence can explain, at least on one level, the appropriation of Orpheus as a popular visual motif, and provides some insight as to how the hero was contextualized and understood, based on these types of associations.

4.3 Orpheus and the Senses

As a musician, the heroic nature of Orpheus was successfully represented not only in the visual, but also in the aural, arts; indeed, the full value of this hero as exemplar was apprehended most fully with the two combined senses of the eyes and the ears. Music, of course, is a concept that can be quite difficult to fully capture in stone or with paint, and attempts to do so result in works that must be considered "unfinished" or "unsatisfactory" in meeting the requirements of the subject itself. Donatello's and Luca della Robbia's *cantorie* feature the cherubic, gamboling putti and beatific young children for which they each garnered praise. (Figs. 4.2 & 4.4) Donatello's design, based upon an ancient sarcophagus relief, does not depend on musical instruments to indicate why the young putti are dancing (Fig. 4.3). Instead, the viewer is confronted with a sculptural group that has been inspired by divine music, whose source must be the actual organ music and laude that would have been sung within the church. While not parading as they do in Donatello's *cantoria*, Della Robbia's children have been rendered in such a manner as to evoke a similar level of musical energy while they play a variety of instruments and sing. The work is divided into two registers, and partitioned along the length according to type of instruments in use.

Della Robbia has prominently featured the lute in this work, which is a direct reference to his depiction of Orpheus on the Florentine campanile. In a section of the top register of the

cantoria, one sees two young women strum and sing on their lutes while five other maidens listen and meditate upon the music they hear. (Fig. 4.5) In the bottom register, a group of young boys listens to three of their number playing the lute, the organ, and what appears to be a lyre. (Fig. 4.6) It is interesting to note that the three instruments featured in this panel are the ones most often associated with the ancient trio of musicians, Linus, Orpheus, and Musaeus in world chronicles.[324] (Fig. 4.7) It is also striking to see the degree to which Della Robbia invokes his relief of Orpheus for the campanile in this work for the interior of the church. The open mouth of the bard who graces the bell tower is mirrored in that of the young woman on the right of the *cantoria* panel, and each plays their lute as their minds appear preoccupied in contemplating or connecting with the divine. Della Robbia seems to have deliberately linked the ancient discovery and symbolic value of music as represented by the mythological demi-god with the contemporary practice of singing *laude* in the church. The link between past and present is furthered when considering that Orpheus is dressed in ancient garb, while the young women are attired in the long, modest dresses that were fashionable in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Absent of their context today, the stony silence of the *cantorie* is at first jarring. It is important to remember, however, that in the late 1430s the organs perched within them, when played, would have created the sonorous environment that essentially provided the missing, aural dimension of the subject depicted. Thus, it was the choral singing and the accompanying organ music that completed the image. That viewers were construed as musical participants who completed the context of Della Robbia's work can be gleaned from the two cherubic toddlers who sit at the feet of the graceful female musicians singing and playing their instruments. Each of the small putti points to one of the young musicians, as if to encourage the audience to

[324] Finiguerra and Colvin, *A Florentine Picture-Chronicle,* f. 47r for Linus and Musaeus, and f. 19v-20r for Orpheus.

contemplate the divine through song. (Fig. 4.5) In the absence of song, the viewers' imagination must inevitably account for the musical elements created out of stone by Donatello and Della Robbia. When considering Orpheus in his various visual guises, it is likewise necessary to account for the fact that music is meant to be heard and the musician seen.

Bertoldo's bronze Orpheus, today in the Bargello Museum of Florence, is a work that has often left lingering questions in the minds of Florentine art historians. In particular, they wonder whether the unfinished sculpture is meant to represent the hero Orpheus or the pagan god Apollo. (Fig. 4.8) When considering the prevalence of performers who stepped into the role of Orpheus at banquets and outdoor parades or festivals, whether in overt mythological costume or merely as musicians, whose presence would have evoked, however vaguely, thoughts of the heroic bringer of culture, it is possible to make a strong case that Bertoldo's charge was to present his patron with a sculpture of Orpheus, rather than Apollo.

Sculptures that depicted the pagan gods in isolation, or as autonomous, to use Luba Freedman's characterization of this mode of representation, were rare in Renaissance Italy until the sixteenth-century.[325] Absent from Bertoldo's oeuvre are any free-standing sculptures, medals, or plaquettes of mythological deities, which provides compelling evidence that the enigmatic sculpture of the musician was meant to conjure the association with Orpheus, rather than Apollo, in the mind of the viewer. His life's work also shows the growing demand for small sculptures of mythological heroes in Quattrocento Florence. Just as Apollonio di Giovanni had been known as the Tuscan Apelles for his paintings and illustrations of Aeneas, Bertoldo di

[325] Luba Freedman, *The Revival of the Olympian Gods in Renaissance Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 19-22; 26. On page 20, Freedman defines *autonomous* as a mode of representation in which a figure is depicted "on its own in a statue, in a painting, or in some other work of art; it also appears independent of other figures or objects that are shown in the same space." Essentially, the figure does not participate actively or emotionally with any other figure, and in sculpture especially, eschews narrative content entirely. She cites Antonio Federighi's marble statuette of Bacchus as a rare example of an autonomous sculpture featuring an Olympian god in the Quattrocento.

Giovanni's work shows a notable talent for fashioning statues of mythological demi-gods in miniature. These included numerous works that feature Hercules, as well as an exquisite sculpture of the hero's cousin, Bellerophon.[326] It is therefore logical to assume that Bertoldo would also have welcomed the opportunity to create a small sculpture of Orpheus at the request of a patron who most certainly would have been familiar with his previous works. Scholars have referenced the presence of a wreath encircling the young musician's head as a telltale sign that the appropriate identification of the subject is Apollo. This is unconvincing, however, because Orpheus is strongly associated with the natural world, and the addition of the wreath to these types of figures is fairly common.[327] This addition on Bertoldo's part was, no doubt, meant to represent the hero's status as a supremely talented poet, in keeping with one of the most common characterizations of Orpheus at the time, as well as to refer to his sylvan origins.

In this case, Bertoldo, who was known to be embedded within the influential circle of the Medici, and would likely have been in attendance at numerous festival-type events which featured musicians, some perhaps even in the guise of Orpheus, would have readily had at his disposal various ideas gleaned from life as to how best to depict the heroic bard. In the Bargello sculpture, Orpheus plays a *lira da braccio*—a musical instrument that was often substituted in Quattrocento representations of Orpheus for the traditional ancient lyre.[328] Earlier in the century, Della Robbia had included a lute in its stead, so depictions of this demi-god can also shed light on what types of instruments were preferred at specific moments during the fifteenth century. Additionally, the variation on instruments exemplifies an artistic proclivity for "modernizing"

---

[326] James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 179-182.
[327] Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 149-158. For instance, Bertoldo's heraldic wild men are also crowned with wreaths.
[328] Jerzy Miziołek, "'Orpheus and Eurydice': Three 'Spalliera' Panels by Jacopo del Sellaio," *I Tatti Studies* (2009): 140, esp. footnote 110; as Miziolek explains, the *lira da braccio* was considered in the Renaissance to have had ancient origins. The ancient Greeks believed that Orpheus himself had invented the seven-stringed lyre.

classical figures, and it is not a stretch to assume that Bertoldo's work is meant to evoke a sense of musical repasts and entertainments such as would have been encountered in contemporary settings of festivity. As mentioned above, Della Robbia had also characterized his young lute players in the upper register of his *cantoria* as contemporary through the type of clothing they wear.

That Bertoldo's sculpture is meant to portray Orpheus and not merely a young musician, however, is evident because the figure is nearly nude, a mode of depiction that was used by artists of the fifteenth century to indicate antiquity and its inspiration. Interestingly, the figure is youthful—and is the youngest Orpheus, to my knowledge, created in any medium in Florence during the century. Jacopo del Sellaio's panels, for instance, follow earlier iconographic descriptions of Orpheus, such as Della Robbia's version, by presenting him as an aged man, while Baccio Baldini's Orpheus in the Florentine Picture Chronicle appears to be in his later teens.

Bertoldo's sculpture of Orpheus depicts the hero in a trance-like, inspired state. His bodily and facial expressions indicate to the viewer that these are the visible signs of an inner state of divine harmony, which trickles into his fingers and turns the instrument into a sonorous vehicle for inspiring others. The body, as much as the face and instrument, in this case, are meant to appeal to the visual sense, while the music itself must be imagined. This sculpture operates as a statement of the artist's talent. His bronze musician, while unable to participate in the aural arts, is nevertheless able to evoke its musical impact in a visual sense. This juxtaposition of the senses is a turn on the *paragone*, which began with the notion of poetry set in competition with painting, but which later could encompass also the perceived disparity between mediums of visual expression, i.e., sculpture vs painting. The Neoplatonists like Marsilio Ficino extended

this relationship even further in their consideration of music, poetry, and rhetoric in their formulations of the concept of divine harmony. Here, the powerful facility of Bertoldo's own hand is in evidence in crafting the figure of Orpheus, who indeed almost seems to emit the notes indicated by his craftsmanship. So, in this case, the turn on the popular *paragone* is the notion of sculpture vs music, though these two arts are not really set in competition with one another in the figure of Orpheus; rather, together, they seem to heighten the connection between viewer and art object by providing a multi-sensory viewing experience for those who encounter the work. As observed in the decorative *cantorie* of Donatello and Della Robbia, for this work to resonate on every level with its audience, it is incumbent upon the viewers themselves to complete the visual act by imagining and providing the sounds that seem to emit from the *lira da braccio* of Orpheus.

4.4 Classical Sources and the Multi-Sensory Dimensions of Orpheus

The late antique author Callistratus, writing in the fourth or early fifth century of the Common Era and known only from his *Descriptions*, provides us with an idea of the kind of response a viewer might have had when encountering a sculpture of this hero. He begins his ekphrastic description of the bronze sculpture by indicating its location—on Helicon, the mountain upon which the Muses were considered to live—and by describing Orpheus' physical appearance. The hero stands tall, wears a *chiton*, a tall Persian tiara, golden sandals and a golden belt. According to Callistratus, the beauty of his face, his "luxuriant" hair, and the positioning of his body are so intense that they indicate to the viewer the "musical nature of the soul" that lies within.[329] Bertoldo's sculpture wears his hair encircled with a leafy wreath (likely the laurel, sacred to his father, and indicative of the hero's status as lauded poet), and animal skins hang

[329] Philostratus the Elder, Philostratus the Younger, Callistratus, *Philostratus the Elder, Imagines. Philostratus the Younger, Imagines. Callistratus, Descriptions,* Trans. Arthur Fairbanks, Loeb Classical Library 256. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 401.

down his nearly nude figure. This characterizes Bertoldo's Orpheus as a follower of Dionysus and may be meant to put the viewer in mind of the dangerous women, followers of Dionysus in some accounts, who, dressed in animal skins, caused his violent death. This might also provide us with an opportunity to consider the dual implications of music—which can be both a rational and an irrational preoccupation.

It is hard to believe that the sculpture described by Callistratus in such great detail was not an actual work the writer encountered in his travels, so vivid is his description, but it was most certainly only the subject of a literary exercise. Pausanias, on the other hand, devotes a significant amount of space in his travelogue, *Description of Greece*, to Orpheus and the various stories known about him in Boeotia and the region through which the River Helicon flowed.[330] Unlike Callistratus, Pausanias likely did see or know of at least one contemporary statue of Orpheus, though the historian is not too concerned with describing the sculpture in depth, stating merely, "By the side of Orpheus the Thracian stands a statue of Telete, and around him are beasts of stone and bronze listening to his singing." His terse observation takes into consideration Telete, the daughter of Dionysius, who enjoyed singing and dancing in nightly celebrations. Pausanias does continue his discussion of Orpheus as a local hero, explaining that the region's inhabitants believed his bones to be contained within an urn balanced atop a pillar on a road just outside the city of Dium.

But where Pausanias gives short shrift to how the work actually appears, Callistratus satisfies his readers' curiosity regarding how such a work might have been conceived by remarking on the purity of Orpheus' gaze, and the lyre, "which was equipped with as many notes

[330] Pausanias et al., *Description of Greece* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press; W. Heinemann, 1918), IX. 30. 4–12.

as the number of Muses."[331] He next considers the intense illusion of reality that the sculptor has managed to effect. In a description of the musicality of the imagined sculpture, as indicated to a viewer exclusively by engaging the sense of sight, he says, "For the bronze even acted the part of the strings and, being so modified as to imitate each separate note, it obediently carried out the deceit, almost indeed becoming vocal and producing the very sound of the notes."[332]

To further emphasize the strength of the aural sensations as might have been evoked by the visual elements of the sculpture, Callistratus provides an account of all of the birds, beasts, seas, rivers, rocks, and plants that gather eagerly around the musician, each lulled into a sense of calm well-being as they listen to the musician's song. Callistratus brings his ekphrasis of the sculpture to a close by once again commenting admiringly on the musical vibrancy that seemingly reverberated from the bronze: "though there was nothing that gave out a sound or roused the lyre's harmony, yet art made manifest in all the animals the emotions excited by their love of music and caused their pleasure to be visible in the bronze, and in a wonderful manner expressed the enchantment that springs up in the sense-perception of the animals."[333] This valuable account of a sculpture as it was imagined to have been encountered in a natural setting serves to underscore the desire, or even need, on the part of a viewer to truly "hear" Orpheus' lyre, even when depicted in a work of art meant to be apprehended by the sense of sight.

4.5 Orpheus in Renaissance Discourse

Three primary ways Orpheus was categorized in Florentine humanist discourse were as an allegorical figure whose music and lyre represented the harmony of the universe and the spirit of man in the Neoplatonic ideas circulated by humanists such as Poliziano, Ficino, and Landino; as a divinely inspired poet, whose poetry, set to music, provided an ideal parallel to the rhetorical

[331] Callistratus, *Descriptions*, 401.
[332] Callistratus, *Descriptions*, 401.
[333] Callistratus, *Descriptions*, 403.

requirement of excellence that was taught in schools, and finally, as a lover, both tragic and ideal, with instrumental music playing a large role in the courtship practices and imagery of the time. Each of these categories will be explored more fully in what follows, with particular attention provided to the ways in which visual representations of the hero corresponded to these modes of understanding.

4.6 Orpheus in Renaissance Platonism

One might question why Orpheus would hold such sway for the students of Plato's writings in the mid to late fifteenth century. Plato did, after all, disparage poets in an exhaustive list of their negative attributes and ultimately banned them from his ideal city. Citing corruption of the youth and other productive members of his ideal city, Plato dispensed with poets quite emphatically at the end of his treatise. The Athenian philosopher's reputation was somewhat scrubbed of this association as early as the late fourteenth century, and for this Ficino and his circle had Boccaccio and Petrarch to thank. Rather than deny that Plato had no use for poets, the two early Renaissance poets seized upon the definitions of poetry provided in his *Republic* and used it to launch their own defense of the humanist educational agenda, which, of course, included the ancient poets. These two consistently maintained that Plato and other Christian thinkers and writers like Boethius were in fact supportive of the study of poetry, particularly when the allegorical meaning or "truth" within was properly understood. As scholars have pointed out, this was the general foundation for the defense of poetry for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly by Salutati and the Neoplatonists.[334]

Marsilio Ficino, a member of the so-called Platonic Academy (which likely never existed in the form we think of today when we hear the word "academy", but which scholars continue to

[334] David Robey, "Humanist Views on the Study of Poetry in the Early Italian Renaissance," *History of Education* 13.1 (1984): 9.

cite as though it were an institution more than a metaphor),[335] was considered to be the Orpheus of his time. For Naldo Naldi, Ficino was, in fact, the reincarnated Orpheus as he explains in a poem, "Until Marsilius should be granted by divine fate, whose chaste limbs he may willingly put on. Hence he soothes the unyielding oaks with his lyre and his song and softens once more the hearts of wild beasts."[336] The same poet also wrote a pair of couplets from the point of view of the painted Orpheus on Ficino's *lira da braccio*, which state, "I am that Orpheus who moved the woods with his song."[337] With his instrument, Ficino often performed for his fellow humanists at social gatherings, and on one occasion, was even sent a robe from Poland by a friend who explained that, "This foreign costume will make you a true Orpheus, since you already have his singing and his lyre."[338]

As a humanist expert on the art of rhetoric, as well as a lauded poet and musician who turned often to the so-called Orphic Hymns for inspiration, Ficino deliberately modeled himself after the demi-god he so admired. The three aspects that defined the reputation of this particular humanist, namely his rhetorical skills, poetry, and musical ability, quite nicely provide an understanding of how Orpheus was understood in fifteenth-century Florence, especially within educated circles. Through rhetoric and poetry, which could both be brought to life with music, Orpheus represented the ability to persuade. But what, one might ask, was he persuading people to do or understand?

---

[335] See for instance, James Hankins' convincing argument that Cosimo de' Medici never founded an official academy, but that he provide Ficino with Plato's manuscripts, copied from the Greek scholar Gemistus Pletho's codex while in attendance at the Ecumenical Council. From this, Ficino produced a Latin translation of the dialogues. He did provide the scholar with a place to live and work, as patronage typically demanded. James Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 144–62.

[336] *Supplementum Ficinianum*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller (Florence, 1937), II, 262, as translated by Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," 86.

[337] *Supplementum Ficinianum*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller (Florence, 1937), II, 262, as translated by Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," 87.

[338] *Supplementum Ficinianum*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller (Florence, 1937), II, 225, as translated by Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," 87.

In one contemporary approach, which had at its root both Neoplatonic and Christian perspectives, Orpheus was considered to have persuaded men, who stand in for the beasts of ancient writings, to subdue their baser instincts so that they could create a civilization guided by laws, which then provided the opportunity and encouragement for the pursuit of personal and cultural enlightenment via the liberal arts. For instance, Boccaccio wrote, "Orpheus moves the forests which have roots very firmly fixed in the earth, that is, men of obstinate opinions who cannot be swayed from their stubbornness except through the power of eloquence. He stops rivers, that is, dissolute and wanton men who, unless they are emboldened by demonstrations of strong eloquence that lead them toward manly strength, that flow into the sea, that is, virtue, which wishes to lure her toward laudable desires."[339] This view of Orpheus and his contribution to society is in line with humanist readings of the hero as taught in schools and universities of the era, and also fits quite seamlessly within the civic application of humanism. Both Ficino and Landino can be credited with furthering this particular way of interpreting Orpheus and disseminating it to fifteenth-century Florentines.

4.7 Orpheus in Education

With Boccaccio and Petrarch not terribly interested in the methods by which poetry should be taught to eager young minds, as Robey points out, Coluccio Salutati was the first humanist to really concern himself with which poets should be read over the course of a student's education.[340] Of the ancient writers, Virgil and Ovid treated the story of Orpheus in a substantial way, and both were frequently taught in Italian humanist institutions. Ovid's works, including the *Metamorphoses*, had been taught since the medieval era as part of the canon known

[339] Giovanni Boccaccio and Jon Solomon, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 653-657.
[340] Robey, "Humanist Views," 12-13.

as the *auctores*, along with the works of Virgil.[341] In the Renaissance, a student would likely encounter Ovid only after advancing beyond the grammar stage, where his works were taught as part of the curriculum that addressed rhetoric, poetry, and history.[342] If Ovid's *Metamorphoses* declined somewhat in popularity in fifteenth-century Florentine schools from the levels seen in earlier centuries, according to the number of surviving textbooks, the interest in studying Virgil increased substantially in the same period.[343] It was certainly not unusual for a person to own a copy that included the Roman poet's three most important works: The *Georgics*, *Bucolics*, and at least the first six books of the *Aeneid*, if not the epic in its entirety. This ensured that students received at least two good doses of the myth of Orpheus.

When Landino employed the figure of Orpheus in his poetry, the hero was frequently cast as a poetic illustration of the vicissitudes of love. Indeed, this is one of the primary guises of Orpheus in Florentine art and thought, and one that frequently factored into marriage celebrations. On the one hand, he was understood to be a tragic lover whose demonstration of his devotion to Eurydice provided a model for the ideal husband to emulate. Following in Petrarch's footsteps, Landino sets his pen to paper in order to enumerate, describe, and illuminate the many ideal features of his beloved Xandra. In so doing, he relies on his reader's familiarity with Orpheus as the supreme poet and devoted lover, whose facility with the lyre is inspired by the Muses and designed to persuade and entrance. In a letter addressed to his beloved Xandra, he praises her talents for singing and dancing by declaring that she outshone even Calliope, the mother of Orpheus and the Muse of poetry. Then, to his friend, Bernardo

---

[341] Paul F Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 113–114.
[342] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy,* 203.
[343] Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 248; Black draws this conclusion from the presence of only five glossed editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the Florentine archives from the fifteenth century, when seven marked copies have survived from the previous century.

Bembo, he urges that he should allow himself to be occasionally diverted from the tasks of law in order to find comfort in the arms of his lover.[344] Landino further laments that his own Xandra is too far away for comfort, and, in order to cope with this pain, as well as the drudgeries of law,[345] he turns often to the Muses to write poetry and remember Xandra's face. He insists that "Orpheus did not weep so much at Eurydice's departure / when, struck by a snake, she sought the Stygian pool, / as I now do, separated from you by unjust distance; / —though *he* sings of larger things with ampler voice. / Indeed, the Muses bring *him* strength and Calliope / breathes divine frenzy into her son; / and she gives *him* power to gentle lions with his song, / and to lead wild wolves through the mountains of Thrace."[346] In this instance, Landino cleverly presents "divine frenzy" as a welcome antidote to the pain of a lost love. In the absence of love, then, a kind of elevation to a higher plane is possible, which in Orpheus' case resulted in a rapt and diverse audience whose natural inclinations would otherwise require that they attack or flee one another.

This conceit is repeated elsewhere in his poetry; divine harmony is only possible when love is unrequited. From this poem, we might understand that Landino's own efforts at lyrical poetry are enhanced by love's deleterious effect. In another poem addressed to Xandra, Landino equates her feminine virtues, which not only consist of modesty and physical beauty, but also include her abilities to carry on serious conversation, sing as not even Apollo and his lyre can, and dance more skillfully than the Graces, with Orpheus' ability to charm all in his vicinity. Each of these qualities together, writes Landino, "move rocks, move iron hearts, or tigers, / and

[344] Cristoforo Landino and Mary P. Chatfield, *Poems*, The I Tatti Renaissance Library 35 (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1. 29. 1-14.
[345] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, xiii–xiv. In her introduction, Chatfield describes Landino's reluctance to embrace law studies.
[346] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*,1.29. 29–36 Nec tantum Eurydices discessu fleverat Orpheus / cum peteret Stygios icta dracone lacus, / quantum ego nunc a te spatio diductus iniquo, / Xandra; sed hic magno grandius ore sonat. / Quippe ferunt vires Musae spiratque furorem / divinum nato Calliopea suo; / et dat carminibus saevos mollire leones, / Pangaeoque feros ducere monte lupos.

drive shaggy beasts together in mutual love, / let alone me [Landino], whom deft nature has made with melting heart, / and whose tender breast Erato has formed."[347]

Orpheus and his lyre could also be invoked to express or describe familial and, in the following case, filial love. Upon the death of his brother, Landino wrote a eulogy in which he expressed his debilitating grief at his untimely demise in battle at the age of twenty-four. His anguish at this unexpected loss of his youthful sibling is evident throughout, and nowhere more so than when he expresses his inability to seek relief from his overwhelming sadness even in the Muses, "by whose song Orpheus soothed / the spirit of his wife".[348]

4.8 Orpheus As Lover in Art

As in Renaissance thought and poetry, one encounters Orpheus in the guise of devoted husband in Florentine visual representations. One of Jacopo del Sellaio's best known series of *spalliera* panels, created in the mid-1480s for an unknown couple, narrates the most famous moments of the hero's life as presented in Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and then by the early Christian writer Boethius in the twelfth book of *The Consolation of Philosophy.*[349] (Figs. 4.9-4.11) Based upon the episodes depicted, it has been pointed out that another main source was most likely Poliziano's lyrical play, *La fabula di Orfeo*, penned at the behest of and therefore dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga in 1480.[350] Jerzy Miziolek, in his compelling treatment of the panels, examines the iconography in light of the numerous versions of the story—ancient, medieval, and contemporary—and provides a detailed analysis of which parts of the visual narration align with certain details in the vast array of literary possibilities.[351]

---

[347] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, 2.4.43–46. Haec possunt silices, haec ferrea pectora, tigres, / flectere et hirsutas cogere amare feras; / nedum me, facilis molli quem pectore finxit / natura atque Erato mollia corda facit?
[348] Landino and Chatfield, *Poems*, 3.4.133–134; sed nec Pyerides, quo Manes coniugis Orpheus / demulsit, possunt me revocare sono.
[349] Miziołek, "Orpheus and Eurydice," 123.
[350] Miziolek, "Orpheus and Eurydice," 129.
[351] Miziolek, "Orpheus and Eurydice," 124–143.

From this detailed survey and analysis, it is evident that, rather than having chosen to follow one or even two particular sources, Sellaio or, as Miziolek points out, his humanist advisor, must have been familiar with many in circulation at the time. His unique visualization indicates an utter lack of desire to merely replicate scenes from the most well known literary version of the story; rather, he privileges those aspects and details of each account that make for the most intriguing visual panoply of images.

Most of the first panel is given over to the dramatic pursuit of Eurydice by Aristaeus, who has clearly taken advantage of Eurydice's solitude and Orpheus' momentary absence to attempt to initiate an illicit affair—shepherding responsibilities forgotten. (Fig. 4.9) Just as he approaches the distressed young woman, who is almost within arms' length, she is viciously bitten by an adder, whose long form uncoils from the direction of the boulder behind. The next most prominent scene of the panel features Eurydice's lifeless body being carried into the entrance of the underworld by two bird-footed hybrid creatures. In the middle ground on the left side of the panel is the smallest scene. Located some distance behind Aristaeus' grazing sheep, Orpheus plays his lyre for other shepherds. The precise moment depicted is the one in which a frantic messenger has just about reached the group in order to deliver the tragic news of Eurydice's death to the still-preoccupied bard.

The next panel in the sequence features a location change, though the landscape in the background itself is seemingly continuous between panels. Having traveled to Hades, Orpheus is in the process of negotiating Eurydice's return to the living world with Pluto, the god of the underworld. (Fig. 4.10) Gesturing with the bow of his lyre, he appears to be at this moment beseeching Pluto to allow him to play for her life—with Pluto's left hand raised in a gesture of assent. Eurydice, in the same gown as before, sits next to Pluto with her hands seemingly held

behind her back, heightening the sense that she is bound to the afterlife with no hope for rescue. Her worried expression is trained on her husband. In the second half of the panel, in a scene of the same height and prominence, the viewer encounters the heartbreaking moment after Orpheus has defied Proserpina's admonishment to refrain from gazing at his beloved until they are well away from the confines of the underworld. Orpheus' futile attempt to hold on to his wife through sheer will is stymied by a centaur's more effective purchase on her long hair. That the contest between bard and centaur is violent can be seen in the agitated swirls of Eurydice's drapery. Interestingly, Eurydice appears to be grasping not only her husband's sleeve, but also his *lira da braccio* with her left hand. Orpheus, too, holds tightly to his instrument while yanking Eurydice with only one hand, which simultaneously holds the bow.

In the final panel, most of the imagery is given over to Orpheus' concert for the animals, a great variety of which appear mollified and entrapped by the dulcet tones of his lyre. (Fig. 4.11) As mentioned before, the animals that sit docilely before the musician have only recently been charmed from their bestial to their better natures. For example, in the lower left corner, we see the earlier battle between the dragon and the lion, who now sit together in the main section of the panel, with no lingering malice toward one another in evidence. The same pattern can be observed between the horse and the lion, who are locked in battle in the left middle ground, but who in the present scene have joined the bard in front of the natural archway. The dog of Aristaeus is also in attendance, identifiable by his dark collar and orange patches highlighting his fur, as well as one sheep, a lone representative of the shepherd's herd encountered on the first panel. As in the other panels, there are numerous tree stumps scattered throughout the landscape and especially in the foreground, which have been divested of their trunks, branches, and leaves. This was no doubt Sellaio's attempt to indicate to the viewer that so great was Orpheus' power

of persuasion through song that the trees spoken of by Ovid, Virgil, Apollonius Rhodius, and others, moved to better hear the musician. That the stumps populate the foreground so prolifically must also have had a practical reason—to give the viewer unfettered access to the concert, which would have been blocked if full trees had been depicted.

Sellaio has emphasized the bard's mental state by writing the lines of his sorrow over his aged face. As he plays, his eyes appear to seek the attention of the viewer, whose presence completes the circle of the audience. In a small scene on the right, which might easily be overlooked had Sellaio not chosen to paint it a vibrant pink, Orpheus plays his lyre within a *tholos*, no doubt for the pleasure of his father, Apollo.

Combined, these selected scenes and their unique compositional elements work together to create a visualization that provides ample opportunity for Sellaio to apply artistic inventiveness, which is akin to the license Horace argues for in his *Ars Poetica* that applies equally well to poet and artist.[352] I would also suggest that one of the most prominent features of the three panels when considered as a whole is the theme of husbandly/wifely devotion. This choice of focus prompted Sellaio to be selective in which scenes to include. As permanent decoration for the nuptial home/wing of a newly wed couple, the story itself needed to speak to not one, but both, individuals who comprised the couple. The choice to paint Orpheus as an older man, rather than a young lover, would also have had special meaning for a Florentine couple. While young women married quite a bit later in Florence than in comparable cities like Siena and Padua, with the average age between 17 and 18, the husband could very well have been older, even much older, than his bride.[353]

---

[352] Horace. *Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry.* Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library 194. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 443. See especially verses 1-37.

[353] Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), 411-415; See Appendix 4. Anthony Molho's examination of age at marriage for women, with data gleaned

In Sellaio's representation, the age of Orpheus falls somewhere between the white-haired and heavily bearded Pluto, whose ancient appearance is that of a man in the dusk of old age, and Aristaeus, whose smooth, beardless face and spryness of foot serve to characterize him as still securely rooted in the first age of man according to Dante.[354] Orpheus' still-dark beard and countenance, on the other hand, reflect those of a man in the middle years of his life, perhaps between 40-50 years old. Sellaio's choice to include Aristaeus, when Ovid and Renaissance writers often did not, seems an acknowledgement of the temptations that might arise in a marriage. Virgil, in his *Georgics*, commences his fourth book with the attempted rape of Eurydice by Aristaeus, whereupon she, fleeing, inadvertently steps on the snake whose poisonous bite kills her. Ovid leaves out the episode with Aristaeus entirely, recounting only that a snake bit her and sent her into the afterlife.[355] While Philostratus the Younger doesn't include Aristaeus (or even Eurydice, for that matter), Fulgentius does utilize Aristaeus for the purposes of his allegorical reading of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Miziolek points out that only those animals in the vicinity of Orpheus' music are calmed by the music while those depicted at a greater distance continue their aggressive behaviors. This is not necessarily the case. Miziolek's characterization of the action suggests that the panel should be read as a narrative that is unified in time. Instead, it is important to delve more closely into the aspect of time as Sellaio has presented the scenes. In each of the other panels, various episodes of the story occur in the same setting, though the assumption to be made by the viewer, based on familiarity with the literary version of Orpheus' story, is that the events are understood

---

from the 1480 catasto, indicates that 20 is the age when the number of married women first exceeds the number of unmarried women registered. For instance, at this age, there are 129 unmarried women listed and 293 married as compared to the 17 year category, for which there are 274 unmarried and 34 married.

[354] Patrick Boyde, *Perception and Passion in Dante's 'Comedy'* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3-4.

[355] See especially the plot comparison chart in W.S. Anderson, "The Orpheus of Virgil and Ovid: Flebile Nescio Quid," in *Orpheus, the Metamorphoses of a Myth*, ed. John Warden (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 37–39.

to be taking place at different moments in time.

Orpheus invites the new husband and wife to join the idyllic scene with his eyes, as he draws his bow across the lyre strings for the moral edification of the married couple. Faced with such a direct visual address, what might the couple have imagined as they, too, stood transfixed by the bard? Ovid provides a perspective on the subject matter of which the hero sings in accompaniment to his lyre. His account would have been familiar to the educated newlyweds who owned the panel. After the trees gathered around Orpheus and provided shade where there was previously none, he begins to recount in passing the tale of tragic Cyparissus' transformation into the cypress tree. He lingers on the young boy's grief when he accidentally kills the beloved stag he had received as a gift from Apollo, and how he beseeched his deific benefactor to allow his sorrowful tears to cascade forever in remembrance of this act. Apollo granted the youth's request, and changed him into a tree that produces beads of sap along its trunk. This tale would have been directly relevant to the Florentine couple, whose familiarity with the cypress, prolific in Tuscany even today, was inevitable. Then, invoking his mother Calliope to provide inspiration for his coming songs, Orpheus recounts his previous tales of a "weightier vein" and declares: But now I need the gentler touch, for I would sing of boys beloved by gods, and maidens inflamed by unnatural love and paying the penalty of their lust.[356] Essentially, the songs he has resolved to sing are of the very subject matter appropriate for this kind of nuptial furniture. Just as *cassoni* could provide positive models for behavior, they could likewise provide negative exemplars that were meant to deter immorality.

After the tragic story of Cyparissus, Orpheus sings of Ganymede, Jupiter's coveted cupbearer, then of the Cerastae and the Propoetides, who offended Venus by, respectively,

[356] Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume II: Books 9-15,* Trans. Frank Justus Miller, Rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), X. 152-154.

sacrificing to Jupiter their hapless houseguests (rather than appropriate animal victims), and refusing to acknowledge that she was a true goddess. The latter she punished by transforming them into the first harlots, whose blush of modesty was transformed first into a painted lacquer and eventually into granite. Following this cautionary tale, which would have served handily as a primer on the pitfalls of wearing make-up for Renaissance wives, the bard sings of Pygmalion, Myrrha, Venus and Adonis, Atalanta and Hippomenes. These tragic stories conclude book ten of the *Metamorphoses*, which commenced with the unhappy story of Orpheus' loss of Eurydice. Sellaio's arrangement of the subjects of the panels, which closes with Orpheus' recital, echoes Ovid's own order of the story.

That Sellaio kept in mind how contemporary ideas of marriage might be reflected and supported in this tragic tale can be seen in another, perhaps more curious, aspect of his elaborate design. The inclusion of the centaur within the composition has led to some debate as to what the source of his presence might be. Identifying the source might provide a better understanding of the centaur's potential significance for newlyweds. Miziolek argues that it cannot possibly refer to Chiron, the wise centaur who advised Jason to take Orpheus with him on his long and dangerous voyage to retrieve the fleece in the *Argonautica*,[357] and he turns instead to previous visual sources to explain this somewhat odd inclusion. I agree that the centaur depicted in the panel is not meant to be Chiron, but I propose that the answer might, in fact, be located in the story of the Lapiths and the Centaurs as related by Chiron, not as presented by Apollonius Rhodius in the *Argonautica*, but rather as recounted in the *Argonautica Orphica* by an anonymous writer of the fourth century CE. The *Argonautica Orphica* was well known to the humanists of the early Renaissance, who mistakenly believed that the poem belonged to the

[357] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica,* Ed. and trans. William H. Race, Loeb Classical Library 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), I. 24-32.

Orphic hymns, likely because Orpheus himself serves as the narrator.

The bard recounts an evening spent with Chiron in his mountain abode, which culminated in an impromptu competition between himself and the wise centaur to the great delight of all the adventurers present. In the course of Chiron's contribution to the evening's entertainment, he sang of the terrible discord that had threatened to ruin the wedding of the Lapiths before Hercules intervened[358]. Though the character of Orpheus does not, in this passage, relate to the reader the precise words that the centaur sang, we learn more of this event from Ovid, who describes the horrifying scene of abduction in grave detail.[359] The bride herself was physically assaulted, with a centaur grabbing her hair and yanking her along. This imagery echoes the version Sellaio gives us in the contest for the soul of Eurydice between Orpheus and the aged centaur, who pulls Eurydice back by her long golden tresses. This moment of violence visualized on the central panel was no doubt another moral interpretation of the husband's role as protector, and the wife's duty to refrain from placing herself in a compromising position. Therefore, the inclusion of the centaur here was intended mainly to allude to the various stories of Orpheus, but also to make a specific point about the nature of marital duty. In some ways, the events that preceded the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs serve as a parallel to the circumstances that sent first Eurydice, then Orpheus, into the underworld. In both cases, they were brides whose marriage rites were spoiled by the unwanted advances of ones who were not their husbands. While the Lapith bride was abducted and returned, Eurydice was not to be returned to Orpheus. The inclusion of Chiron in this context, then, is meant to serve as a warning for both husband and wife to protect their honor and the sanctity of their marriage at all cost.

Another example of Orpheus' involvement in matters of love is found in a *spalliera* panel

[358] Anon. *Orphic Argonautica,* ed. Jason Colavito (Lulu.com, 2011), 15-16.
[359] Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume II*, XII. 220-226.

by Biagio d'Antonio, executed between 1486 and 1487. (Fig. 4.12) The panel features the marriage rites of Jason and Medea, who stand in a domed *tholos* grasping hands.[360] The chosen setting reflects the *tholos* that Sellaio included in his final panel, where Orpheus can be seen playing his lyre in the circular temple. Hercules, one of the many heroes who joined with Jason in his quest to retrieve the Golden Fleece, stands conspicuously among the crowds of people, witnessing the exchange of vows. Situated at the top of an ornate column of porphyry and presiding over the nuptials is a golden statue of a man playing a *lira da braccio*. Often assumed to be Apollo, the correct identification, is, in fact, Orpheus. I believe that those who were familiar with the story of the Argonauts would have assumed the statue represented this hero, because Apollonius highlights Orpheus' role as musician in the marriage rites and celebrations of the ill-fated couple. In book four of the *Argonautica*, the poet tells us that the women who attended Medea in the festivities, "marveled as they beheld the beauty and stature of the preeminent heroes, and they marveled at the son of Oeagrus (Orpheus) in their midst, as he beat the ground rapidly with his shining sandal to the accompaniment of his beautifully strummed lyre and song. And all the nymphs together, whenever the men sang of marriage, sounded forth the lovely wedding song."[361] A search of the crowds of onlookers surrounding Jason and Medea yields no Orpheus; rather, his presence is indicated in the figure of the statue that plays while the scene unfolds below.

An engraving by Baccio Baldini, now in the collection of the British Museum, likewise serves to illustrate the role of music and poetry in romantic love, and provides an understanding of how Orpheus could have served as a model for the skilled suitor and his responsibilities in the art of courtship. (Fig. 4.13) One of a series of engravings that documents the planetary influences

[360] Andrea Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 304.
[361] Apollonius, *Argonautica*, 4. 1190-1198.

on those born in a certain month, music and poetry are presented by Baldini as a key component in the machinations of love as presided over by Venus for the month of April. Scattered throughout the composition are suitors and their beloveds engaged in various activities of the heart. Young women throw laurel wreaths from balconies to eager men waiting below, evidently to reward them for their poetic expressions of love and admiration. In the left foreground is another attractive woman, who places a wreath on a kneeling suitor while another attempts to persuade her affection by strumming a lyre. Throughout the scene, couples bathe, embrace, and dance. These "children of Venus" represent a visual analogue to Ficino's Neoplatonic interpretation of Orpheus as both creator/artist and lover/prophet of love.[362] Thus, through singing and musical engagements, the soul's creative nature rises to the surface, and through love, the soul is able to know and attain harmony. The humanist known as the Orpheus of his own day acknowledges that while there are two types of love—sacred and profane—according to Orphic writings, man is able to indulge in earthly love as a means to eventually attaining the enlightenment of the sacred.[363] In this engraving, then, Venus in her chariot high above the earth represents the ultimate goal of the Neoplatonic soul – to reach a state of divine harmony.

4.9 Orpheus and the Appeal of Animals in Florence

The most popular way to portray Orpheus in the art of Florence, at least judging by surviving examples, was to depict him entrancing a crowd of animals with his song. (Figs. 4.14-4.15) While this particular episode in the life of the hero had Neo-platonic connotations, especially for humanists and their students, general audiences would also have experienced pleasure in viewing the imaginative menageries transfixed by the bard in visualizations of the scene. The fifteenth century saw a great fascination with animals from foreign lands on the part

[362] Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," 100-101.
[363] Warden, "Orpheus and Ficino," 92-93; 101-102.

of Florentine residents.[364] In a diary entry from November 11, 1487, Landucci records, "Certain animals have arrived here which were supposed to have been sent by the sultan; afterwards we heard, however, that they came from some good friends of Florence, who hoped to be duly rewarded. The animals were as follows: a very tall giraffe, beautiful and graceful; her picture can be seen painted in many parts of Florence, as she lived here for many years. Also a large lion, a goat, and some very strange wethers."[365] The great pomp and excitement with which these animals were received in Florence can be read in a later entry, when Landucci describes their official presentation to the city's government officials on November 18. For the occasion, he remembers, "The aforesaid ambassador of the sultan presented to the *Signoria* the giraffe, lion, and other beasts; and he sat in the midst of the *Signoria*, on the *ringhiera*, he speaking and they thanking him by means of an interpreter. A great crowd had collected in the Piazza that morning to see this. The *ringhiera* was decorated with *spalliere* and carpets, and all of the principal citizens had taken their place on it."[366] While the giraffe was the first of its kind in Florence, lions had been a familiar presence in Florence from its earliest communal history.[367] Kept in the vicinity of the street now known as the Via dei Leoni already in the thirteenth century, the lions' upkeep was paid for through taxes as well as viewing fees levied upon those who desired to see the magnificent beasts.[368]

Much like Romans of the Imperial period, Florentines were also treated to a variety of animal spectacles during the Quattrocento. To mark the visit of Pope Pius II and Galeazzo Sforza to the city in 1459, for instance, officials staged an elaborate event that took advantage of the

[364] For the myriad dimensions of this fascination, as well as the implications for imperial expansion, see Erik Ringmar, "Audience for a Giraffe: European Expansionism and the Quest for the Exotic," *Journal of World History*, 17.4 (2006): 375-397.
[365] Luca Landucci, *A Florentine Diary from 1450 to 1516* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927), 44. The wethers to which Landucci refers are likely to have been castrated rams of some kind.
[366] Landucci, *A Florentine Diary*, 44.
[367] Randolph, "Il Marzocco," 11-13.
[368] Randolph, "Il Marzocco," 11.

many types of animals, both ferocious and docile, that were then available in the city and surrounding countryside. Their hopes were to indulge the eager audience and their distinguished guests in an afternoon of entertainment that consisted of pitting various beasts, including horses, wild boars, and wolves, against twenty-six lions in bloody battle. As is so often the case with animals, the results of these man-made machinations were unexpected and anti-climactic. Rather than attack the motley group of terrified creatures that had been herded into the arena, the seemingly already well-fed lions took to the shade and napped instead. A group of young men ensconced in a hollow giraffe attempted to re-energize the sleeping cats by poking and prodding them, but to no avail.[369] The disappointed crowds were forced to leave with their bloodlust un-sated that day. This particular incident notwithstanding, the lions of Florence could be quite ferocious, as Landucci recorded in his diary. On one occasion, a fourteen-year-old boy died after a gruesome mauling by a lion. The diarist tells us that the child had accompanied the lion keeper into the creature's cage, and whereas the keeper had a good rapport with the cats, it seems that they were none too pleased to have an additional visitor.[370] On another occasion earlier in the history of Florence, a lion managed to escape his enclosure and menace the streets. In this case, at least, the child in its sights was spared when the lion ran back the way it came, frightened away by the mother's screams.[371] The understanding that such a beast could be at turns both violent and calm would thus have informed the way viewers engaged with scenes of Orpheus singing to the animals. Experience teaches that a show of timidity from an animal can be merely illusory, which contributes a sort of added tension to scenes of the bard holding creatures big and small in the sway of his dulcet song.

[369] Joan Barclay Lloyd, *African Animals in Renaissance Literature and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 39; Ringmar, "Audience for a Giraffe," 381.
[370] Landucci, *A Florentine Diary*, 44. See entry for November 12, 1487.
[371] Randolph, "Il Marzocco," 11.

For artists, like their more general audience, the appeal the Orphic concert held for depiction would have differed from that of the poets and writers, who were primarily interested in the allegorical significance of the concert. Instead, those who represented this scene visually would have enjoyed the license available to them to decide which animals to include in the pastoral setting. That 1487 was likely the first occasion for Florentine artists to view a live giraffe explains why, in Baldini's comprehensive two-page treatment of a young Orpheus surrounded by animals, there is no such long-necked mammal present, especially when recalling Landucci's comment that portraits of the much beloved creature could be viewed throughout the city. Nevertheless, Baldini presents the viewer with a panoply of creatures that includes inhabitants of the land, sky, and sea. Representing the land are animals as varied as the salamander, snakes, a monkey, lions, goats, sheep, and a spiky porcupine, while birds like the screech owl, parrot, crow, eagle, and waterfowl represent the sky-dwellers. The sea creatures that have crowded along the shore to listen to Orpheus' lyre include different types of fish, a whale, a crab, and even a sea turtle.

Although most descriptions of the scene in the literature then known did provide certain guidelines as to what types of animals would have been transfixed by Orpheus' lyre, the imaginative possibilities for variety must have appealed to the artist, because they frequently included fanciful, hybrid creatures. Baldini, for instance, depicts the siren, harpy, dragon, centaur, and sphinx in his composition. It was certainly the artists who innovated in this respect, because most of the extant sources do not actually include many, if any, mythical or hybrid animals among the crowds listening to the hero's recital. Apollonius Rhodius is the only poet to associate Orpheus with the Sirens, for instance, whose fatal and alluring song the Argonauts were able to avoid only because Orpheus played his own lyre to drown out the sound. It is likely

also the source for Baldini's harpy, because the Argonauts save Phineas from these terrible, ravenous beasts, though in this instance Orpheus does not utilize his lyre. One other mythological creature that a number of the ancient and medieval writers do cite in their exposition of Orpheus' fate is Cerberus, the three-headed guardian of the underworld, who is lulled into submission by Orpheus' song as he follows Eurydice into Hades. Those writers who mention Cerberus also generally indicate that the punishment of Hades' most miserable denizens, Ixion, Tityus, Tantalus, for example, has momentarily been paused in his presence. None of these, however, appear in fifteenth-century depictions of Orpheus' concert in Florence.

Model books created and used in artists' workshops from the Quattrocento often contain depictions of animals, and attest to the demand for visual representations of these creatures in various context. In an engraving attributed by the British Museum to the circle of Baccio Baldini, one encounters the opposite of the peaceful Orphic concert just described. (Fig. 4.16) Within the wild landscape, wolves, lions, and dogs can be seen attacking rabbits and wild boar. In the left foreground, a tense stand-off between a ferocious, ruffed lion and a hissing dragon with outspread wings leaves the viewer to wonder which of the two will emerge the victor. The subject of this lively engraving echoes the background of Sellaio's version of the Orphic concert, in which is painted a series of violent animal encounters just moments before Orpheus begins to sing and play. The juxtaposition that such engravings offered between animals in their natural state, and those under the sway of the heroic Orpheus' lyrical talent, provided viewers with opportunities to indulge their curiosity about the animal kingdom, while reflecting on the unpredictability of the natural world outside of the city gates. Tempered by their own varied experiences with animals in the city walls, the viewer was drawn to the pastoral concert motif because it offered both visual splendor and a view of Orpheus' unique power to civilize even the

rudest creature.

4.10 Conclusion

The degree to which Orpheus had become enmeshed in the cultural fabric of Florence, especially by the last decades of the fifteenth century, is perhaps best illustrated by Pope Leo X's commission of a large, over-life-sized sculpture of the famous bard, executed by Baccio Bandinelli and delivered to the Medici palace courtyard in 1519. (Fig. 4.17) Modeled after the Apollo Belvedere, this sculpture has the significant distinction of being the first, permanent, monumental sculpture of a mythological figure to be created and displayed in Renaissance Florence. The Medici pope's very deliberate decision to eschew a new representation of David, a hero who had by that time accumulated years of Medicean and anti-Medicean associations as dictated by the prevailing winds of the political climate, indicates that he harbored a desire to avoid an overt show of renewed Medicean dominance within the city.[372] The pope's choice of a hero with whom to fill the empty space that had once been dedicated to Donatello's *David* was a carefully considered one. It seems likely to have been motivated by the fact that Orpheus was already a popular mythological hero in the city, but had not yet acquired specific political associations. The figure of Orpheus, though, was not a *tabula rasa*. Ficino and others had emphasized the poet-musician's connection to the divine through the musical, poetic, and rhetorical arts. He was presented as a model for those who aspired to lead a culturally rich and harmonious life, which was, of course, the reward of living in civic society.

In her analysis of the enormous pedestal designed to display Bandinelli's *Orpheus*, Karla Langedijk suggests that the *imprese* appended to its sides were meant to stir viewers, however subtly, to consider Leo X's ties to Cosimo de' Medici, the *Pater Patriae* of Florence. Although

[372] Karla Langedijk, "Baccio Bandinelli's Orpheus: A Political Message." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 20.1 (1976): 36-37.

the Medici had had their vehement detractors, that Cosimo had officially been given this lofty epithet following his death certainly had a lasting impact on the citizens of Florence. This is especially true, as can be verified, in the letters and writings of humanists (like Landino and Ficino), who considered the patriarch, both in life and after death, with a generous measure of fondness. The various interpretations a Florentine might make when encountering the pope's yoke, even without his personal motto, SVAVE, on the pedestal upon which Orpheus stood would have delicately implied the connection to Cosimo, whose own *imprese* of the empty yoke under the personification of Florence was well remembered and not as fraught as the current Medicean occupation of the city.[373] That a sculpture of Orpheus was chosen for such a visible and symbolically significant location in lieu of another mythological hero closely associated with the Medici, namely Hercules, serves to underscore the prominence and permanence of the musical hero in the cultural and visual life of the city as had been firmly established in the humanist discourse and visual record of the Quattrocento.

[373] Langedijk, "Baccio Bandinelli's Orpheus," 37.

CHAPTER 4 FIGURES

Fig. 4.1 Luca della Robbia, *Orpheus* (As Poetry or Music), 1434-37. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.2 Donatello, *Cantoria,* 1433-39. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

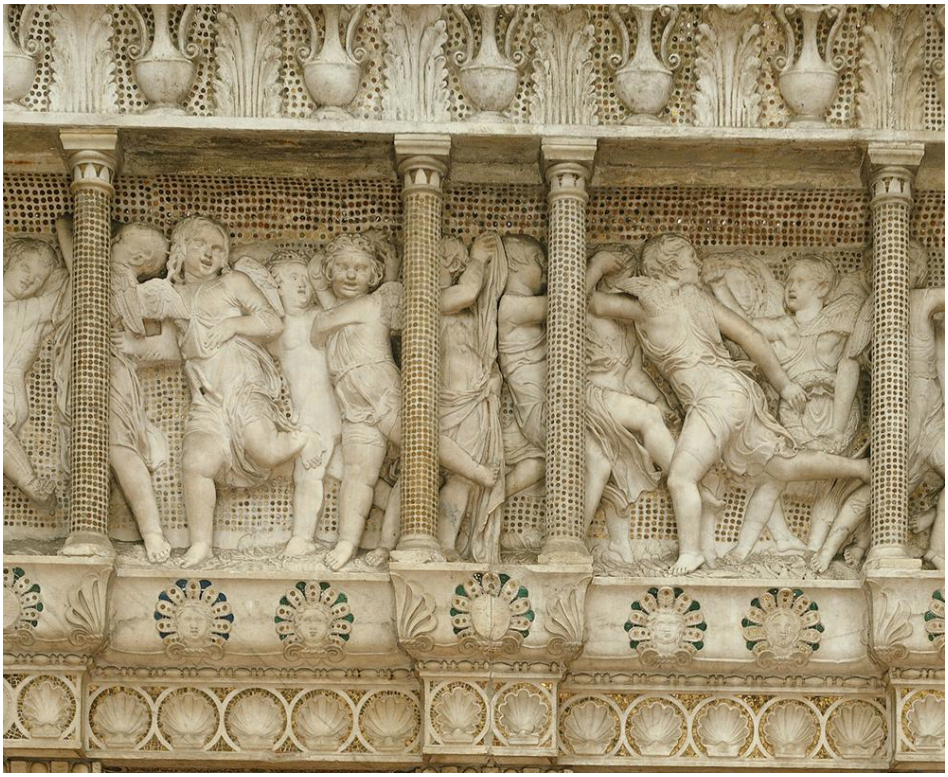

Fig. 4.3 Donatello, *Cantoria,* Detail, 1433-39. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.4 Luca della Robbia, *Cantoria,* 1431-38. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.5 Luca della Robbia, *Cantoria,* Detail, 1431-38. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.6 Luca della Robbia, *Cantoria,* Detail, 1431-38. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.7 *Linus Playing a Portative Organ and Musaeus Playing the Lute*, 1470-75. brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, British Museum, London.

Fig. 4.8 Bertoldo di Giovanni*, Orpheus*, 1480. bronze, 17 in. (44 cm) Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

Fig. 4.9 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Orpheus and Eurydice: Death of Eurydice*, c. 1485. tempera on Panel, Rotterdam Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Fig. 4.10 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Orpheus and Eurydice: Orpheus and Eurydice in Hades* c. 1485. tempera on panel, Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art, Kiev, Ukraine.

Fig. 4.11 Jacopo del Sellaio, *Orpheus and Eurydice: Orpheus Charming Animals with His Music*, c. 1485. tempera on panel, Wawel Royal Castle, Cracow, Poland.

Fig. 4.12 Biagio d'Antonio, *The Marriage of Jason and Medea*, ca. 1486-87. tempera on panel, Museé des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France.

Fig. 4.13 Attributed to Baccio Baldini, *Venus,* c. 1464. engraving. British Museum, London.

Fig. 4.14 Circle of Baccio Baldini, *Orpheus Charming the Animals*, 1470-75. brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, British Museum, London.

Fig. 4.15 Circle of Baccio Baldini, *Orpheus Charming the Animals*, 1470-75. brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, British Museum, London.

Fig. 4.16 attrib. to Baccio Baldini, *Beasts and Birds Hunting and Fighting*, 1460. British Museum, London.

Fig. 4.17 Baccio Bandinelli*, Orpheus and Cerberus*, 1519. marble, 78.7 in. Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence, Italy.

CONCLUSION

For Florentines, there was a utility in thinking about heroism in terms that privileged the semi-divine, pagan entities as a class of hero. This prevailing attitude of the fifteenth century is revealed when tracing the heroic ideal through time, from the first artistic representations of famous men in the civic and domestic spaces of Florence to the treatment of mythological heroes and their narratives as valuable subjects for visualization in their own right. A distinctive quality, unique to figures like Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus, was that they provided a secular dimension to virtue that could be deployed in allegorical terms when the need or desire arose. For humanists and their students, this quality set mythological heroes apart not only from their biblical counterparts, whose narratives could not as easily be modified, but also from historical men of worth, whose lives were entrenched in historical reality. As represented by mythological heroes, the reconfiguration of what virtue could consist of nevertheless retained moral qualities. This satisfied the republic's demand that its citizens provide civic service of a secular nature, while simultaneously ensuring that its religious ethos was not forgotten in the process. Additionally, Florence was a city comprised of strong family units, and by turning to these heroes for moral guidance, its citizens were able to envision themselves as both founders of a new republic, as well as guardians of a much older legacy, upon which their own system of governance was modeled.

In their role as purveyors of virtue, mythological heroes provided a nuanced view of virtue, and of how its essential qualities might be absorbed by an individual whose own desire for virtue was reflected in the heroic narratives and episodes that comprised the demi-gods. The visual reception of these figures was shaped to a great degree by the literary commentaries of the humanists, together with the educational curriculum of the *studia humanitatis*. In fact, their

steady presence in the visual arts of Quattrocento Florence produces an ideal opportunity to examine the processes by which Renaissance Florentines synthesized and reactivated the ancient meanings associated with these heroes. Visual imagery was used to fortify processes of memory, and to strengthen the memorization skills required to commit the ancient authors to memory. Just as words produced pictures within the mind, visual representations could be used to recall the words that had been earlier stored in memory for future contemplation.

Artistic representations that featured the deeds of a mythological hero could operate in conjunction with text, or as a way to recall text and previous learning. Sustained examination and contemplation of a mythological hero were also believed to imprint praiseworthy characteristics upon the beholder's own character. Images of fame and its heroes provided a path to immortality that could co-exist, in some ways, with religious ideas of the afterlife and eternal glory. While there was certainly friction between these two ideas of immortality, as indicated in Petrarch's own laments on Time and its destruction of Fame, in practice, patrons like Cosimo de' Medici made good use of the humanists who wrote encomia that would serve to remind others of their virtues, even after death. This reveals that, for the fifteenth-century Florentine, immortality could be realized through portraits that highlighted their virtue in life, be they visual or literary, as well as through the Christian belief in eternal, heavenly, glory.

While heroes provided a common ground from which to build a case for virtue in itself, mythological heroes, as models, also provided opportunities to think about the deeper implications of human nature. Certainly it was overwhelmingly argued in the literature of the Renaissance that each of these heroes was a model of ideal virtue. Emulation was necessary for the purpose of enhancing one's own virtue, whether in terms of effective leadership, perfect judgment, and strength of will, or a myriad of other qualities. An insistence on highlighting the

ideal and allegorizing the uncomfortable, however, indicates the degree to which mythological heroes could also represent their opposite. This becomes most apparent in the visual imagery that helped to elucidate the literary exegesis and commentaries that had been written on these figures.

Artistic representations of mythological heroes contained an inherently unsettling dimension. An educated viewer's approach to interpreting visual material could be informed by allegorical exegesis, but, just as easily, visualizations of poetic narrative or episodes from ancient texts might present ambiguities that compelled viewers to confront the material on its own terms. In other words, artistic representations of heroic narratives, when unaccompanied by moral commentary, could inadvertently reveal the less than ideal characteristics of the mythological hero.

Throughout the fifteenth century, this type of hero most frequently appeared as subjects for small-scale works of art. Nevertheless, the increasing demand for visual imagery featuring Aeneas, Hercules, and Orpheus, whether for symbolic or exemplary purposes, was interlaced with and, indeed, generative of, the monumental ideas and modes of discourse that coalesced to provide them with their unique applicability within the republic. This foundation, would, in part, prompt their extraordinary proliferation through the High Renaissance and into later sixteenth-century art. It is tempting to see a correlation between the visual demands of a republican city-state and the diminutive size in which this particular type of hero was most often represented in visual imagery. It is also significant that "famous men" series, whether depicted in fresco cycles or in world chronicles, were the main vehicle for their earliest visual representation. In those visual contexts, mythological heroes were one type among many—part of a group. When they began to be singled out, it was for their versatility and their value as models of a specific kind of republican virtue. That Florence began moving toward a more autocratic model of governance in

the late Quattrocento and, after the revived republic of 1494-1512, again in the early Cinquecento might then offer an avenue into further exploration of the visual phenomenon of mythological heroes as subjects depicted in monumental scale, and for viewing in public and semi-public spaces of the city. Beginning with the first Medici pope's commission of Orpheus for the Medici palace in Florence, and then moving rapidly into the creation of large sculptures of Hercules, such as the one Bandinelli completed to stand alongside Michelangelo's *David*, and finally culminating in the representation of mythological heroes like Perseus, who had no tangible or sustained presence in the visual culture of the previous century, the political currents that reshaped humanist discourse in the Cinquecento consequently influenced the way the mythological hero was represented in a courtly society.

There has been a reversal of fortunes for the liberal arts in the United States in recent decades. In Florence, by the end of the fifteenth century, the *ars dictaminis* had been largely replaced with the *studia humanitatis*, but now, centuries later, we are hearing an increasing number of demagogues cry for the dissolution of the liberal arts educational model we inherited from the humanists of Italy. Those who presently attempt to devalue the role of the humanities in the education of our citizen body justify their stances by denying the relevance of such arts in an educational path that they believe should more fully focus on degrees leading to jobs and substantial economic rewards. Educational curricula in the Renaissance played an important role in determining which kinds of heroic models were chosen for emulation and just how Florentine citizens internalized the laudable examples of mythological heroes. At a moment in our country's history when the humanities are embattled for a variety of debated reasons, it is instructive to reflect on the shifts of our historical legacy and our own iteration of the humanities—essentially, its place in the education of our collective progeny and our future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources: Modern Editions and Translations

Alberti, Leon Battista. *Momus*. Edited by Virginia Brown and Sarah Knight. Translated by Sarah Knight. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. Translated by Cecil Grayson. Introduction and Notes by Martin Kemp. London: Penguin, 1991.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*. Translated by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1988.

Anon. *Orphic Argonautica*. Translated by Jason Colavito. Lulu.com, 2011.

Apollodorus. *The Library.* Translated by James George Frazer. 1921. Reprint, London: W. Heinemann, 1963.

Apollonius Rhodius. *Argonautica.* Edited and translated by William H. Race. Loeb Classical Library 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Aristotle. *Aristotle's Poetics*. Edited by John Baxter and Patrick Atherton. Translated by George Whalley. Montreal Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997.

Aristotle. *De Anima*. Translated by J.A. Smith. The Internet Classics Archive, Daniel C. Stevenson. http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.3.iii.html.

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated and with an Introduction by David Ross. Revised by J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson. Oxford, Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Augustine. *City of God, Volume III: Books 8-11.* Translated by David S. Wiesen. Loeb Classical Library 413. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Augustine. "On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed." *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 3. Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by S. D. F. Salmond. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887, 22.39-22.40.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Amorosa Visione.* Translated by Robert Hollander, Timothy Hampton, and Margherita Frankel. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Famous Women.* Edited and Translated by Virginia Brown. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *The Fates of Illustrious Men*. Translated and Abridged by Louis Brewer

Hall. New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co, 1965.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*. Edited and Translated by Jon Solomon. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus. *The Consolation of Philosophy.* Translated by David Slavitt, Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 2009. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 21 July 2016.

Cicero, Marcus T. *Ad C. Herennium, de Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)*. Translated by Harry Caplan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *Cicero On the Ideal Orator.* Translated by James M. May, and Jakob Wisse. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Cicero. *On the Republic. On the Laws.* Translated by Clinton W. Keyes. Loeb Classical Library 213. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.

Dante Alighieri. *Monarchy*. Translated and Edited by Prue Shaw. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Dati, Gregorio. *Istoria di Firenze di Goro Dati dall' Anno Mccclxxx all' Anno Mccccv: Con Annotazioni.* Firenze: Nella Stamperia di G. Manni, 1735.

Ficino, Marsilio. *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*. 7 vols. Translated by Members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London. London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 1975.

Ficino, Marsilio. *The Philebus Commentary*. Translated by Michael J. B. Allen. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000.

Filarete. *Treatise on Architecture: Being the Treatise by Antonio di Piero Averlino, Known as Filarete.* Translated by John R. Spencer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.

Fulgentius, Fabius P. *Fulgentius the Mythographer*. Translated by Leslie George Whitbread. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971.

Herodotus. *The Histories.* Translated by A. D. Godley. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1920.

The Holy Bible, King James Version. Cambridge Edition: 1769; *King James Bible Online*, 2016. www.kingjamesbibleonline.org.

Horace. *Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry.* Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Loeb Classical Library 194. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Landino, Cristoforo. *Poems.* Translated by Mary P. Chatfield. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Landucci, Luca. *A Florentine Diary from 1450 to 1516*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927.

Martial. *Epigrams, Volume I: Spectacles, Books 1-5.* Edited and Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Loeb Classical Library 94. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Medici, Lorenzo de', and Jon Thiem. *Lorenzo de' Medici: Selected Poems and Prose*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8.* Translated by Frank Justus Miller. Revised by G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 42. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses, Volume II: Books 9-15.* Translated by Frank Justus Miller. Revised by G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 43. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.

Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume I: Books 1-2 (Attica and Corinth).* Translated by W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library 93. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918.

Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1).* Translated by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod. Loeb Classical Library 188. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Petrarca, Francesco. *Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters: A Selection from His Correspondence with Boccaccio and Other Friends, Designed to Illustrate the Beginnings of the Renaissance*. Translated by James H. Robinson with collaboration of Henry W. Rolfe. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898.

Petrarca, Francesco. *Gli Uomini Illustri; Vita di Giulio Cesare*. Edited by Ugo Dotti. Torino: G. Einaudi, 2007.

Petrarca, Francesco. *The Triumphs of Petrarch.* Translated by Ernest Hatch Wilkins. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962.

Philostratus the Elder, Philostratus the Younger, Callistratus. *Philostratus the Elder, Imagines. Philostratus the Younger, Imagines. Callistratus, Descriptions.* Translated by Arthur Fairbanks. Loeb Classical Library 256. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931.

Philostratus. *On Heroes.* Translated by Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.

Plato. *Republic, Volume I: Books 1-5.* Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy. Loeb Classical Library 237. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Pliny. *Natural History*. Vol. 9. Translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Plutarch. *Lives, Volume I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola.* Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. Loeb Classical Library 46. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Quintilian. *Institutes of Oratory*. Edited by Lee Honeycutt. Translated by John Selby Watson. 2006. Iowa State. 23 April 2016. <http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/>.

Rucellai, Giovanni. *Zibaldone.* Edited by Gabriella Battista. Firenze: SISMEL, 2013.

Salutati, Coluccio. *De laboribus Herculis*. Edited by B. L. Ullman. Turici: In aedibus Thesauri mundi, 1951.

Scala, Bartolomeo. *Essays and Dialogues*. Translated by Renée Neu Watkins. Introduction by Alison Brown. Cambridge, Mass: I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, 2008.

Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo*. 3 Vols. Translated by Hans C. Hamilton and William Falconer London: H.G. Bohn, 1854.

Vasari, Giorgio. *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. Translated by Gaston du C. de Vere. Edited by Philip J. Jacks. New York: Modern Library, 2006.

Vegio, Maffeo. *Short Epics*. Edited and Translate by Michael C. J. Putnam, with James Hankins. Cambridge, Mass: I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, 2004.

Vergilius, Publius M. *Vergilius Vaticanus: Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Original Format von Codex Vaticanus Latinus 3225: Aus dem Besitz der Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.* Edited by David H. Wright. Graz: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, 1984.

Vergilius Publius Maro: Opera: Commento al Codice. Modena: Incipit, 2004.

Vespasiano. *Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates: The Vespasiano Memoirs, Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century.* Translated by William George and Emily Waters. New York, Harper & Row, 1963.

Virgil. *Opera: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis; Manoscritto 492 della Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze*. A cura di Bigiarelli B. Maracchi. Firenze, Italy: Reproduzione Mycron, 1969.

Virgil. *The Georgics*. Poetry in Translation. 2001. Translated by A. S. Kline. Retrieved August 5, 2016, http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasgeorgics.htm.

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Random House, 1983.

Virgil. *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6.*. Loeb Classical Library 63. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.

Virgil, H. Rushton Fairclough, and G. P Goold. *Virgil.* Rev. ed. Translated by H. Rushton Fairclough. Revised by G. P. Goold. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Secondary Sources

Acidini, Christina. "L'Immagine di Orfeo nelle Arti Visive e nello Spettacolo." *Il Dolce Potere delle Corde: Orfeo, Apollo, Arione e Davide nella Grafica tra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Edited by Susanne Pollack. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2012, 1-3.

Aleci, Linda Klinger. "Images of Identity: Italian Portrait Collections of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance*. Edited by Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson. London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, 1998, 67-79.

Alexander, J. J. G. *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450-1550*. Munich: Prestel, 1994.

---. *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

---. "A Virgil Illuminated by Marco Zoppo." *The Burlington Magazine*. 111.797 (1969): 512-514.

Alison Wright. *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il Suo Mondo:Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Firenze, 9-13 giugno 1992)*. Edited by Gian Carlo Garfagnini and Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1994.

Amberger, Annelies. *Giordano Orsinis 'Uomini Famosi' in Rom: Helden der Weltgeschichte im Frühhumanismus*. München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2003.

Ames-Lewis, Francis. *The Library and Manuscripts of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici*. New York: Garland Pub, 1984.

---. "Modelbook Drawings and the Florentine Quattrocento Artist." *Art History*. 10.1 (1987): 1-11.

---. "Representing the Nude Figure in Early Renaissance Florentine Art." *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60*. Edited by B. Strozzi Paolozzi and Marc Bormand. Firenze: Mandragora, 2013, 61-67.

Andrews, Lew. *Story and Space in Renaissance Art: The Rebirth of Continuous Narrative*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Armstrong, Lilian. "Triumphal Processions in Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, and

Further Sources for Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*." *Manuscripta*. 52 (2008): 1-63.

Baldassarri, Stefano U., and Arielle Saiber, editors. *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History, and Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Barber, Richard W., and Juliet R. V. Barker. *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry, and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989.

Barkan, Leonard. *Mute Poetry, Speaking Pictures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Barocchi, Paola, ed. *Il Giardino di San Marco: Maestri e Compagni del Giovane Michelangelo: Firenze, Casa Buonarroti, 30 giugno-19 ottobre 1992*. [Cinisello Balsamo, Italy]: Silvana, 1992.

Barolsky, Paul. "There is No Such Thing as Narrative Art." *Arion*. 18.2 (2010): 49-62.

Baron, Hans, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny.* Rev. 1 vol. ed. with an epilogue. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Barriault, Anne B. *Spalliera Paintings of Renaissance Tuscany: Fables of Poets for Patrician Homes*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.

Bartlett, Kenneth R., ed. *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance: A Sourcebook*. North York, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Baskins, Cristelle Louise. *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender in Early Modern Italy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Bayer, Andrea, ed. *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*. New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2008.

Bell, Rudolph M. *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Bernheimer, Richard. *Wild Men in the Middle Ages.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Bietenholz, Peter G. *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought from Antiquity to the Modern Age*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.

Black, Robert. *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Blumenröder, Sabine. “Das Orpheus-Bild im 15. Jahrhundert - Musische Männer und Wilde Frauen: Ursprungsmythen und Künstlerselbstverständnis in der Malerei.” *Der Orpheus-Mythos von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, 205-228.

Bode, Wilhelm von. *Bertoldo und Lorenzo de’ Medici. Die Kunstpolitik des Lorenzo il Magnifico im Spiegel der Werke seines Lieblingskünstlers Bertoldo di Giovanni.* Freiburg Br.: Pontos-Verlag, 1925.

Bombe, Walter. *Nachlass-inventare des Angelo da Uzzano und des Lodovico di Gino Capponi*. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1972.

Bonfante, Larissa. “Nudity As a Costume in Classical Art.” *American Journal of Archaeology*. 93.4 (1989): 543-570.

Bridgeman, Jane, and Alan Griffiths. *A Renaissance Wedding: The Celebrations at Pesaro for the Marriage of Costanzo Sforza & Camilla Marzano D'Aragona, 26-30 May 1475*. London / Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers and Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2013.

Brink, Joel, and Francesco Petrarca. *Simone Martini, Francesco Petrarca, and the Humanistic Program of the Virgil Frontispiece*. Cambridge, 1977.

British Academy, and George Holmes. “Florence and the Great Schism.” *Art and Politics in Renaissance Italy: British Academy Lectures*. Edited by George Holmes. Oxford; New York: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1993. 19–40.

Brown, Alison. “Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence and its Contribution to Early Modern Political Thought.” *The Journal of Modern History*. 58.2 (1986): 383-413.

---. “The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. (1961): 24, no. 3/4, 186-221.

Brucker, Gene A. *Florence, the Golden Age, 1138-1737*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1984.

Bullard, Melissa Meriam. “Possessing Antiquity: Agency and Sociability in Building Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Gem Collection.” *Humanism and Creativity In the Renaissance: Essays In Honor of Ronald G. Witt.* Edited by Christopher S. Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens. Leiden: Brill, 2006, 85-111.

Burke, Jill. “Nakedness and Other Peoples: Rethinking the Italian Renaissance Nude.” *Art History*. 36 (2013): 714-739.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.* 2 vols. New York: Harper, 1958.

Burns, Norman T., and Christopher J. Reagan. *Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the*

Renaissance: Papers of the Fourth and Fifth Annual Conferences of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2-3 May 1970, 1-2 May 1971. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975.

Bush, Virginia L. "Bandinelli's 'Hercules and Cacus' and Florentine Traditions." *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture, 15th Through 18th Centuries.* Edited by Henry A. Millon. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1980: 163-206.

Butterfield, Andrew. "New Evidence for the Iconography of David in Quattrocento Florence." *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*. 6 (1995): 115-133.

Calafati Marco. "I Gondi: Storia di una Grande Famiglia tra l'Italia e la Francia." *Gondi: Una Dinastia Fiorentina e il Suo Palazzo = A Florentine Dynasty and its Palazzo*. Edited by Gabriele Morolli and Paolo Fiumi. Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013, 19-83.

Callmann, Ellen. *Apollonio di Giovanni*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Campbell, Stephen J. *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Campigli, Marco. "Il Camino di Palazzo Gondi = The Fireplace of Palazzo Gondi." *Gondi: Una Dinastia Fiorentina e il Suo Palazzo = A Florentine Dynasty and its Palazzo*. Edited by Gabriele Morolli and Paolo Fiumi. Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013, 129-141.

Canova, Giordana Mariani. "Marco Zoppo e la Miniatura." *Marco Zoppo e il Suo Tempo*. Edited by Vigi B. Giovannucci and Lilian Armstrong. Bologna, Italy: Nuova Alfa, 1993, 121-135.

Canova, Giordana Mariani, and Federica Toniolo. *Guglielmo Giraldi: Miniatore Estense*. Modena: F.C. Panini, 1995.

Carruthers, Mary J. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Carruthers, Mary, and Jan M. Ziolkowski. *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

"Cassone-Fronts in American Collections-ii. Pesellino's *Six Triumphs of Petrarch*." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*. 10.43 (1906): 67–65.

Cerquiglini, Jacqueline. "'Fama' et Les Preux: Nom et Renom À la Fin du Moyen Age." *Médiévales. Centre de Recherche Université Paris Viii*. (1993): 35-44.

Chance, Jane. *Medieval Mythography: The Emergence of Italian Humanism, 1321-1475.* Vol. 3 Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2015.

Charney, Sara. “Artistic Representations of Petrarch’s *Triumphus Famae*.” *Petrarch's Triumphs: Allegory and Spectacle*. Edited by Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare A. Iannucci. Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1990, 223-233.

Chazelle, Celia. “Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseilles.” *Word & Image*. (1990): 138-153.

Christian, Kathleen. *Empire Without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350-1527*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Chrétien, Heidi L. *The Festival of San Giovanni: Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*. New York: Peter Lang, 1994.

Clemens, Raymond. “Medieval Maps in a Renaissance Context: Gregorio Dati and the Teaching of Geography in Fifteenth-Century Florence.” *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods*. Edited by Richard J. A. Talbert and Richard W. Unger. Leiden: Brill, 2008, 237-256.

Clough, Cecil H. “Art as Power in the Decoration of the Study of an Italian Renaissance Prince: The Case of Federico da Montefeltro.” *Artibus et Historiae*. (1995): 19-50.

Cochrane, Kirsty. “Orpheus Applied: Some Instances of His Importance in the Humanist View of Language.” *The Review of English Studies*. (1968): 1-13.

Cohn, Werner. “Franco Sacchetti und das Ikonographische Programm der Gewölbemalereien von Orsanmichele.” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*. (1958): 65-77.

Coleman, Kathleen M. “Fatal Charades Roman Executions Staged As Mythological Enactments.” *The Journal of Roman Studies*. 80 (1990): 44-73.

Colvin, Sidney. *A Florentine Picture-Chronicle: Being a Series of Ninety-Nine Drawings Representing Scenes and Personages of Ancient History, Sacred and Profane*. New York: B. Blom, 1970.

Costa, Iacopo. “Heroic Virtue in the Commentary Tradition on the *Nichomachean Ethics* in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century.” *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages: Commentaries on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, 1200-1500*. Edited by István P. Bejczy. Leiden: Brill, 2008, 153-172.

Cunnally, John. *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence In the Renaissance.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

---. “Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship During the Renaissance.” *Journal of the History of Collections*. 6 (1994): 129-143.

Davies, Martin, and John Goldfinch. *Vergil: A Census of Printed Editions, 1469-1500*. London: The Bibliographical Society, 1992.

Debby, Nirit Ben-Aryeh. "Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici in Renaissance Florence, 1400-1406." *Renaissance Quarterly*. 55 (2002): 19-48.

---. *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers: Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) and Bernardino Da Siena (1380-1444)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001.

De Jong J. L. "Dido in Italian Renaissance Art: The Afterlife of a Tragic Heroine." *Artibus et Historiae*. 59 (2009): 73-90.

Dempsey, Charles. *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012.

DePrano, Maria. "*Chi vuol esser lieto, sia*: Objects of Entertainment in the Tornabuoni Palace in Florence." *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*. Edited by Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013, 127-142.

Dodge, Barbara. "Petrarch and the Arts." *Petrarch's Triumphs: Allegory and Spectacle*. Edited by Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare A. Iannucci. Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1990, 177-182.

Donato, Maria M., and Daniela Parenti. *Dal Giglio al David: Arte Civica a Firenze Fra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Firenze, Italia: Giunti, 2013.

Donato, Maria M. "Hercules and David in the Early Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio: Manuscript Evidence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute.* (1991): 83-98.

---. "Famosi Cives: Testi, Frammenti e Cicli Perduti a Firenze fra Tre e Quattrocento." *Ricerche di Storia dell'Arte*, 30, 1986, 27-42.

---. "Gli eroi romani tra storia ed "exemplum": I primi cicli umanistici di Uomini famosi." *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte Italiana: 2*. Edited by Salvatore Settis. Torino: Einaudi, 1985, 95-152.

Draper, James David. *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992.

Duggan, Lawrence G. "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?" *Word & Image*. (1989): 227-251.

Dunlop, Anne. *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy.* University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.

---. “Parading David.” *Art History*. 35 (2012): 682-701.

Ebert-Schifferer, S. *Natur und Antike in der Renaissance: Ausstellung im Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, Frankfurt am Main, 5. Dezember 1985 bis 2. März 1986.* Frankfurt am Main: Liebieghaus Museum Alter Plastik, 1985.

Elmer, Peter, Nick Webb, and Roberta Wood. *The Renaissance in Europe: An Anthology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Emison, Patricia A. *The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Ettlinger, Leopold D. “Hercules Florentinus.” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.* 16.2 (1972): 119–142.

Fagiolo, Marcello. *Virgilio nell'arte e nella Cultura Europea: Roma, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, 24 settembre - 24 novembre 1981*. Roma: De Luca, 1981.

Finiguerra, Maso, and Sidney Colvin. *A Florentine Picture-Chronicle: Being a Series of Ninety-Nine Drawings Representing Scenes and Personages of Ancient History, Sacred and Profane*. New York: B. Blom, 1970.

Floyd, Shawn. “Thomas Aquinas: Moral Philosophy.” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://www.iep.utm.edu.

Forbes, Clarence A. “Crime and Punishment in Greek Athletics.” *The Classical Journal*. 47.5 (1952): 169-203.

Forte, Bettie. “Vergil’s *Aeneid* in Literature and Art of the Italian Renaissance.” *The Vergilian Society*. 28 (1982) 4-14.

Frazier, Alison Knowles. *Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Freedman, Luba. *The Revival of the Olympian Gods in Renaissance Art.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

---. “The Arno Valley Landscape in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Painting.” *Viator*. 44.2 (2013): 201-242.

Friedman, John Block. *Orpheus in the Middle Ages.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

Fusco, Laurie. “The Use of Sculptural Models by Painters in Fifteenth-Century Italy.” *The Art Bulletin*. 64.2 (1982): 175-194.

Fusco, Laurie S., and Gino Corti. *Lorenzo de' Medici, Collector and Antiquarian.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Gagliardo, Matilde. "L'Quattro Elementi' della Sala Theatri nel Palazzo Romano del Cardinale Giordano Orsini." *Prospettiva.* 108 (2002): 36-64.

Galinsky, Karl. *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century*. Totowa, N.J: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972.

Garzelli, Annarosa. "Micropittura su Temi Virgiliani Prima e Dopo Apollonio di Giovanni. Apollonio, Giovanni Varnucci, Mariano del Buono, e Altri." *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in Onore di Federico Zeri*. v.1, Milano: Electa, 1984, 147-162.

Gaylard, Susan. *Hollow Men: Writing, Objects, and Public Image In Renaissance Italy.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Gilbert, Creighton. "The Fresco by Giotto in Milan." *Arte Lombarda*. (1977): 31-72.

Gilbert, Creighton. *Italian Art, 1400-1500: Sources and Documents.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Godi, Carlo. "La 'Collatio Laureationis' del Petrarca." *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica*. 13 (1970): 1-27.

Goldthwaite, Richard A. *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Goldstein, Carl. "Rhetoric and Art History in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque." *The Art Bulletin*. 73.4 (1991): 641-652.

Gombrich, Ernst H. "Apollonio di Giovanni: A Florentine Cassone Workshop Seen Through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 18 (1955): 16-34.

---. *Norm and Form*. London: Phaidon, 1966.

Grafton, Anthony. *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture*. Washington: Library of Congress, in association with the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, 1993.

Gray, Hanna H. "Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 24.4 (1963): 497-514.

Grendler, Paul F. *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Gualvanei de la Flamma OP, Opusculum de rebus gestis ab Azone, Luchinno et Iohanne vicecomitibus: Ab anno MCCCXXVIII usque ad annum MCCCXLII. Edited by Carlo Castiglioni. *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 12, pt. 4, Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1938.

Guicciardini, Paolo, and Emilio Dori. *Le Antiche Case ed il Palazzo dei Guicciardini in Firenze.* Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1952.

Guidobaldi, Nicoletta. "The Role of Music in Italian Court Festivals in the Early Renaissance." *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics, and Performance*. Edited by J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2002, 261-269.

Hahn, Cynthia. "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality." *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*. Edited by Robert S. Nelson. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 169-196.

Hampton, Timothy. *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Hankey, A. Teresa. "Salutati's Epigrams for the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. (1959): 363-365.

Hankins, James. "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy'." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes.* (1990): 144-161.

Harper, James G. "Turks as Trojans; Trojans as Turks: Visual Imagery of the Trojan War and the Politics of Cultural Identity in Fifteenth-Century Europe." *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*. Edited by Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 151-179.

Helas, Philine, and Gerhard Wolf. "The Shadow of the Wolf: The Survival of an Ancient God in the Frescoes of the Strozzi Chapel (S. Maria Novella, Florence), or Filippino Lippi's Reflection on Image, Idol and Art." *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World.* Edited by Michael W. Cole and Rebecca E. Zorach. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009, 133-157.

Hendrix, John, and Charles H. Carman. *Renaissance Theories of Vision*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010.

Henry, Elisabeth. *Orpheus with His Lute: Poetry and the Renewal of Life*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

Horowitz, Maryanne C. *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Howard, Peter. "Preaching Magnificence in Renaissance Florence." *Renaissance Quarterly*.

61.2 (2008): 325-369.

Hubert, Hans, W. “Gestaltungen des Heroischen in den Florentiner David-Plastiken.” *Heroen und Heroisierungen in der Renaissance,* Edited by Achim Aurnhammer and Manfred Pfister. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag in Kommission, 2013. 181-218.

Husband, Timothy, and Gloria Gilmore-House. *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism.* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980.

Jacks, Philip, and William Caferro. *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

Jacobsen, Michael A. “A Note on the Iconography of Hercules and Antaeus in Quattrocento Florence.” *Source: Notes in the History of Art.* 1.1 (1981): 16–20.

Jeanneret, Michel. *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Jesnick, Ilona Julia. *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic: An Exploration of the Figure of Orpheus in Graeco-Roman Art and Culture with Special Reference to its Expression in the Medium of Mosaic in Late Antiquity*. Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 1997.

Joost-Gaugier, Christiane L. “Dante and the History of Art: the Case of a Tuscan Commune Part I: the First Triumvirate at Lucignano.” *Artibus et Historiae*. 11.21 (1990): 15-30.

---. “Dante and the History of Art: the Case of a Tuscan Commune. Part II: the Sala del Consiglio at Lucignano.” *Artibus et Historiae*. 11.22 (1990): 23-46.

---. “Poggio and Visual Tradition: ‘Uomini Famosi’ in Classical Literary Description.” *Artibus et Historiae.* 12 (1985): 57-74.

---. “The Early Beginnings of the Notion of ‘Uomini Famosi’ and the ‘De Viris Illustribus’ in Greco-Roman Literary Tradition.” *Artibus et Historiae*. 6 (1982): 97-115.

---. “Giotto's Hero Cycle in Naples: A Prototype of Donne Illustri and a Possible Literary Connection.” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*. 43.3 (1980): 311-318.

Jurdjevic, Mark. “Civic Humanism and the Rise of the Medici.” *Renaissance Quarterly*. 52.4 (1999): 994-1020.

Kallendorf, Craig. *The Virgilian Tradition: Book History and the History of Reading in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate/Variorum, 2007.

---. *Humanist Educational Treatises.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

---. “Historicizing the 'Harvard School': Pessimistic Readings of the *Aeneid* in Italian

Renaissance Scholarship." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.* 99 (1999): 391-403.

---. *In Praise of Aeneas: Virgil and Epideictic Rhetoric in the Early Italian Renaissance*. Hanover, N.H: University Press of New England, 1989.

Kendrick, M G. *The Heroic Ideal: Western Archetypes from the Greeks to the Present*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2010.

Kenseth, Joy. "The Virtue of Littleness: Small-scale Sculptures of the Italian Renaissance." *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*. Edited by Sarah Blake McHam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 128-148.

Kent, Dale. V. *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Kohl, Benjamin G., Ronald G. Witt, and Elizabeth B. Welles. *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978.

Labate, Mario. "In Search of the Lost Hercules: Strategies of the Fantastic in the *Aeneid*." *Paradox and the Marvellous in Augustan Literature and Culture*. Edited by Philip R. Hardie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 126-144.

Lemaître, Alain J., and Erich Lessing. *Florence and the Renaissance: The Quattrocento*. Paris: Terrail, 1993.

Langedijk, Karla. "Baccio Bandinelli's Orpheus: A Political Message." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.* 20.1 (1976): 33–52.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Totemism.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

L'Estrange, Elizabeth. "Deschi da Parto and Topsy-Turvy Gender Relations in Fifteenth-Century Italian Households." *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600-1530*. Edited by Elizabeth L'Estrange and Alison More. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011, 127-144.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, and Robert Phillimore. *Laocoon*. London: Macmillan, 1874.

Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC). 8 vols. Zürich: Artemis, 1981.

Liversidge, M. J. H. "Virgil in Art." *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil.* Edited by Charles Martindale. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 91-103.

Llewellyn, Nigel. "Virgil and the Visual Arts." *Virgil and His Influence: Bimillennial Studies*. Edited by Charles Martindale. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1984, 117-140.

Lloyd, Joan Barclay. *African Animals in Renaissance Literature and Art.* Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1971.

Loisel, Gustave Antoine Armand. *Histoire des Ménageries de L'antiquité à Nos Jours.* Paris: O. Doin et fils, 1912.

Lord, Mary L. "Petrarch and Vergil's First Eclogue: the Codex Ambrosianus." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. 86 (1982): 253-276.

Mack, Charles R. "Building a Florentine Palace: The Palazzo Spinelli." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.* (1983): 261-284.

Mackenney, Richard. *Renaissances: The Cultures of Italy, C. 1300-C. 1600*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Manca, J. "Moral Stance in Italian Renaissance Art: Image, Text, and Meaning." *Artibus et Historiae*. 44 (2001): 51-76.

Mare de la, Albina C. "Vespasiano da Bisticci as Producer of Classical Manuscripts in Fifteenth-Century Florence." *Medieval Manuscripts of the Latin Classics: Production and Use: Proceedings of the Seminar in the History of the Book to 1500, Leiden, 1993*. Edited by Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel and Margaret M. Smith. Los Altos Hills, Calif: Anderson-Lovelace, 1996, 166-207.

Martines, Lauro. "Poetry as Politics and Memory in Renaissance Florence and Italy." *Art, Memory and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 48-63.

McHam, Sarah Blake. "Public Sculpture in Renaissance Florence." *Looking at Italian Renaissance* Sculpture. Edited by Sarah Blake McHam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 149-188.

McIver, Katherine A. "Let's Eat: Kitchens and Dining in the Renaissance Palazzo and Country Estate." *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*. Edited by Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013, 159-173.

Miller, Dean A. *The Epic Hero*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Miller, Stephanie R. "Parenting in the Palazzo: Images and Artifacts of Children in the Italian Renaissance Home." *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*. Edited by Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013, 67-88.

Miziołek, Jerzy. "'Orpheus and Eurydice': Three 'Spalliera' Panels by Jacopo del Sellaio." *I Tatti Studies.* (2009): 117–148.

Mode, Robert Louis. “The Orsini Sala Theatri at Monte Giordano in Rome.” *Renaissance Quarterly.* 26.2 (1973): 167-172.

---. “Masolino, Uccello and the Orsini 'Uomini Famosi'.” *The Burlington Magazine.* (1972): 368-378.

Molho, Anthony. *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Monfasani, John. *Language and Learning in Renaissance Italy: Selected Articles*. Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum, 1994.

Montagu, Jennifer. *Bronzes*. New York: Putnam, 1963.

Morolli, Gabriele, and Paolo Fiumi, eds. *Gondi: Una Dinastia Fiorentina e il Suo Palazzo = A Florentine Dynasty and its Palazzo*. Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013.

Morrison, Jennifer K. “Apollonio di Giovanni's ‘Aeneid’ Cassoni and the Virgil Commentators.” *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*. (1992): 26-47.

Murrin, Michael. *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in its Rise and Decline.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Musacchio, Jacqueline M. *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Museo nazionale del Bargello (Florence, Italy), and Francesca Fumi Cambi Gado. *Stemmi nel Museo nazionale del Bargello*. Firenze: Associazione amici del Bargello, 1993.

Najemy, John M. *A History of Florence, 1200-1575.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006.

Nagy, Gregory. *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours.* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013.

Nevile, Jennifer. *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250-1750.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Newby, Elizabeth A. *A Portrait of the Artist: The Legends of Orpheus and Their Use in Medieval and Renaissance Aesthetics*. New York: Garland, 1987.

Nyholm, Esther. “A Comparison of the Petrarchan Configuration of the *Trionfi* and their Interpretation of Renaissance Art.” *Petrarch's Triumphs: Allegory and Spectacle*. Edited by Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare A. Iannucci. Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1990, 235-255.

Olszewski J., Edward. “Framing the Moral Lesson in Pollaiuolo’s *Hercules and Antaeus*.” *Wege*

Zum Mythos. Edited by Luba Freedman and Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich. Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2001. 71–87.

Orgel, Stephen. "The Example of Hercules." *Mythographie der Frühen Neuzeit*: *Ihre Anwendung in den Künsten*. Edited by Walther Killy. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984, 25-47.

Pade, Marianne. *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives In Fifteenth-Century Italy.* Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2007.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Panyagua, Enrique R. *Catalogo de Representaciones de Orfeo en el Arte Antiguo*. vols. 1-3 Salamanca: Helmántica, 1972-3.

Paolini, Claudio, Daniela Parenti, and Ludovica Sebregondi. *Virtù D'amore: Pittura Nuziale nel Quattrocento Fiorentino*. Firenze: Firenze Musei, 2010.

Parke, Catherine Neal. *Biography: Writing Lives.* New York: Twayne, 1996.

Parronchi, Alessandro. "The Language of Humanism and the Language of Sculpture: Bertoldo As Illustrator of the Apologi of Bartolomeo Scala." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes / Ed. E. H. Gombrich [u.a.]*. (1964): 108-136.

Partridge, Loren W. *Art of Renaissance Florence, 1400-1600*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Pellecchia, Linda. "From Aesop's Fables to the 'Kalila Wa-Dimna': Giuliano da Sangallo's Staircase in the Gondi Palace in Florence." *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance.* 14/15 (2011): 137–207.

---. "Stepping Up: Observations on the Renaissance Staircase in Florence." *Opvs Incertvm / Universita degli Studi di Firenze*. (2008): 42-49.

---. "Untimely Death, Unwilling Heirs: The Early History of Giuliano da Sangallo's Unfinished Palace for Giuliano Gondi." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.* (2004): 77-117.

Pellegrini, Anthony L. *The Early Renaissance: Virgil and the Classical Tradition*. Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1984.

Pfister, Manfred. "Zur Einführung: Helden-Figurationen der Renaissance." *Heroen und Heroisierungen in der Renaissance,* Edited by Achim Aurnhammer and Manfred Pfister. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag in Kommission, 2013. 13-26.

Phillips, John G. *Early Florentine Designers and Engravers: Maso Finiguerra, Baccio Baldini, Antonio Pollaiuola, Sandro Botticelli [and] Francesco Rosselli. A Comparative Analysis of Early Florentine Nielli, Intarsias, Drawings, and Copperplate Engravings*. Cambridge: Published for the Metropolitan Museum of Art [by] Harvard University Press, 1955.

Pollack, Susanne. "Il Suono delle Corde Genere Immagini: La Lira nelle Rappresentazione Italiane di Apollo e Orfeo, XV-XVI Sec. *Il Dolce Potere delle Corde: Orfeo, Apollo, Arione e Davide nella Grafica tra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Edited by Susanne Pollack. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2012, 11-24.

Polleroß, Friedrich. "From the Exemplum Virtutis to the Apotheosis: Hercules as an Identification Figure in Portraiture: An Example of the Adoption of Classical Forms of Representation." *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation*. Edited by Allan Ellenius. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 37-62.

Preston, Claire. "Ekphrasis: Painting in Words." *Renaissance Figures of Speech*. Edited by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 115-129.

Preyer, Brenda. "Florentine Palaces and Memories of the Past." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 176-194.

Putnam, Michael C. J. *Virgil's Epic Designs: Ekphrasis in the Aeneid*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Rabil, Albert. *Knowledge, Goodness, and Power: The Debate Over Nobility Among Quattrocento Italian Humanists.* Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991.

Randolph, Adrian W. B. *Touching Objects: Intimate Experiences of Italian Fifteenth-Century Art.* New Haven [Connecticut]: Yale University Press, 2014.

---. *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

---. "Il Marzocco: Lionizing the Florentine State." *Coming About– A Festschrift for John Shearman*. Edited by Lars R. Jones and Louisa Chevalier Matthew. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Art Museums, 2000, 11–18.

Reed, Marcia. "Feasting in the Streets: Festivals and the Cuccagna." *The Edible Monument: The Art of Food for Festivals.* Edited by Marcia Reed. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2015, 73-100.

Richardson, Carol M, Kim Woods, and Michael W. Franklin. *Renaissance Art Reconsidered: An*

Anthology of Primary Sources. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007.

Riess, Jonathan B. "The Civic View of Sculpture in Alberti's *De re Aedificatoria*." *Renaissance Quarterly*. (1979): 1-17.

Ringmar, Erik. "Audience for a Giraffe: European Expansionism and the Quest for the Exotic." *Journal of World History*. 17.4 (2006): 375-397.

Rivers, Kimberly. "Writing the Memory of the Virtues and Vices in Johannes Sintram's (d. 1450) Preaching Aids." *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Lucie Doležalová. Leiden: Brill, 2010, 31-48.

Robb, Nesca A. *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance*. London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935.

Robey, David. "Humanist Views on the Study of Poetry in the Early Italian Renaissance." *History of Education*. 13.1 (1984): 7-25.

Rubin, Patricia Lee. "Art and the Imagery of Memory." *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*. Edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 67-85.

Rubinstein, Nicolai. *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532: Government, Architecture, and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

---. "Classical Themes in the Decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes.* 50 (1987): 29–43.

Saalman, Howard. "Tommaso Spinelli, Michelozzo, Manetti and Rosselino: For Ulrich Middeldorf on His 65th Birthday." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians / Society of Architectural Historians*. (1966): 151-164.

Saalman, Howard, and Philip Mattox. "The First Medici Palace." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians.* (1985): 329-345.

San Juan, Rose M. "Mythology, Women and Renaissance Private Life: The Myth of Eurydice in Italian Furniture Painting." *Art History*. (1992): 127-145.

Scavizzi, "The Myth of Orpheus in Italian Renaissance Art, 1400-1600." *Orpheus, the Metamorphoses of a Myth*. Edited by John Warden. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, 111-162.

Schiesari, Juliana. *Beasts and Beauties: Animals, Gender, and Domestication in the Italian Renaissance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Schmitt, Annegrit. "Zur Wiederbelebung der Antike im Trecento: Petrarcas Rom-Idee in

Ihrer Wirkung auf die Paduaner Malerei: Die Methodische Einbeziehung des Römischen Münzbildnisses in die Ikonographie 'berühmter Männer'." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz.* (1974): 167-218.

Schröter, Elisabeth. "Orpheus in den Kunst des Mittelalters und der Renaissance: Eine Vorläufige Untersuchung." *Blick auf Orpheus: 2500 Jahre Europäischer Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Antiken Mythos*. Edited by Christine Mundt-Espín. Tübingen: Francke, 2003, 109-157.

Schubring, Paul, *Cassoni: Truhen und Truhenbilder der Italienischen Frührenaissance.* 2. verm. aufl. Leipzig: K.W. Hiersemann, 1923.

Segal, Charles. *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Seznec, Jean. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Sheard, Wendy Stedman, and Phyllis Williams Lehmann. *Antiquity in the Renaissance*. Northampton, Mass.: Smith College Museum of Art, 1978.

Sheard, Wendy S., and John T. Paoletti. *Collaboration in Italian Renaissance Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

Shorr, Dorothy C. "Some Notes on the Iconography of Petrarch's Triumph of Fame." *The Art Bulletin*. 20.1 (2015): 100-107.

Silva, Romano. "Strumenti Musicali 'alla Greca e all'Antica' nel Rinascimento." *Memoria dell'Antico nell'Arte Italiana.* Vol. 1. Edited by Salvatore Settis. Torino: G. Einaudi, 1984, 361-379.

Simon, Robert B. "Bronzino's 'Cosimo I de' Medici as Orpheus.'" *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin.* 81.348 (1985): 17–27.

Simons, Patricia. "Hercules in Italian Renaissance Art: Masculine Labour and Homoerotic Libido." *Art History.* 31.5 (2008): 632–664.

Simpson, W. A. "Cardinal Giordano Orsini (+1438) as a Prince of the Church and a Patron of the Arts. A Contemporary Panegyric and Two Descriptions of the Lost Frescoes in Monte Giordano." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes.* 29 (1966): 135–159.

Spallanzani, Marco. *Inventari Medicei, 1417-1465: Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni, Piero di Cosimo*. Firenze: Associazione 'Amici del Bargello', 1996.

Springer, Carolyn. *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance*. Toronto: University of

Toronto Press, 2010.

Stahel, Thomas H., and Cristoforo Landino. "Cristoforo Landino's Allegorization of the Aeneid: Books III and IV of the *Camaldolese Disputations*." Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1968.

Stapleford, Richard, ed., trans. *Lorenzo de' Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.

Starn, Randolph. "Reinventing Heroes in Renaissance Italy." *Art and History: Images and their Meaning*. Edited by Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K.Rabb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 67-84.

Steadman, John M. "Heroic Virtue and the Divine Image in Paradise Lost." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 22 (1959): 88-105.

Stefanson, Dominic. "Man as Hero – Hero as Citizen: Models of Heroic Thought and Action in Homer, Plato, and Rousseau." Ph.D. Thesis. University of Adelaide, 2004.

Strong, Roy C. *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450-1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Strozzi, Beatrice P., and Marc Bormand, Eds. *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60*. Firenze: Mandragora, 2013.

Swerdlow, N. M. "The Recovery of the Exact Sciences of Antiquity." *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture*. Edited by Anthony Grafton. Washington: Library of Congress, 1993, 125-167.

Syed, Yasmin. *Vergil's Aeneid and the Roman Self: Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Syson, Luke, and Dora Thornton. *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy.* London: British Museum, 2001.

Taccheri, Umberto. "Dante's Orpheus." *Neoplatonism and the Arts*. Edited by Liana Cheney and John Hendrix. Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

Toll, Katharine. "Making Roman-Ness and the 'Aeneid'." *Classical Antiquity*. 16.1 (1997): 34-56.

Tönnesmann, Andreas. *Der Palazzo Gondi in Florenz*. Worms: Werner'schen Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983.

Trachtenberg, Marvin. "An Antique Model for Donatello's Marble David." *The Art Bulletin.*

(1968): 268-269.

Trexler, Richard C. *Public Life In Renaissance Florence.* New York: Academic Press, 1980.

Uždavinys, Algis. *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*. London: Matheson Trust, 2011.

Vegio, Maffeo, Anna C. Brinton, Thomas Twyne, Gawin Douglas. *Maphaeus Vegius and His Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid: Chapter on Virgil in the Renaissance.* Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1930.

Ventrone, Paola. *Le Tems Revient: Il Tempo si Rinuova: Feste e Spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Firenze, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, 8 aprile-30 giugno 1992*. Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1992.

Vicari, Patricia. "*Sparagmos*: Orpheus Among the Christians." *Orpheus, the Metamorphoses of a Myth*. Edited by John Warden. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, 63-83.

Vickers, Brian. "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance." *New Literary History*. 14.3 (1983): 497-537.

Voss, A. "Orpheus Redivivus: The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino." *Brills Studies in Intellectual History.* Edited by Peregrine Horden. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, 227-242.

Wackernagel, Martin. *The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist: Projects and Patrons, Workshop and Art Market*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Walker, Daniel P. "Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonist." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes.* (1953): 100-120.

Warden, John. "Orpheus and Ficino." *Orpheus, the Metamorphoses of a Myth*. Edited by John Warden. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, 85-110.

Watkins, Renée. *Humanism & Liberty: Writings on Freedom from Fifteenth-Century Florence*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978.

---. "L.B. Alberti in the Mirror: An Interpretation of the 'Vita' with a New Translation." *Italian Quarterly*. 112 (1989): 5-29.

Watson, Paul F. *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the Early Renaissance*. Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1979.

Weiss, Roberto. *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1969.

Weiss, Susan F. "Medieval and Renaissance Wedding Banquets and Other Feasts." *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe*. Edited by Martha Carlin and Joel Thomas Rosenthal. London: Hambledon Press, 1998, 159-174.

Welch, Katherine E. *The Roman Amphitheatre: From its Origins to the Colosseum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Whitaker, Lucy. "Maso Finiguerra, Baccio Baldini and the Florentine Picture Chronicle." *Florentine Drawing at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. Edited by Elizabeth Cropper. (1992): 181-196.

Wilson-Okamura, David S. *Virgil in the Renaissance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Witt, Ronald. "What Did Giovannino Read and Write? Literacy in Early Renaissance Florence." *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*. 6 (1995): 83-114.

---. *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983.

Witthoft, Brucia. "Marriage Rituals and Marriage Chests in Quattrocento Florence." *Artibus et Historiae*. (1982): 43-59.

Wlosok, Antonie. "Illustrated Vergil Manuscripts: Reception and Exegesis." *The Classical Journal*. 93.4 (1998): 355-382.

---. "Textkritische Marginalien und Allegorisierende Illustrationen im Vergilcodex 837 der Universitätsbibliothek in Valencia." *The Classical Tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Proceedings of the First European Science Foundation Workshop on "The Reception of Classical Texts".* Edited by Claudio Leonardi and Olsen B. Munk. Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1995.

---. "*Gemina Pictura:* Allegorisierende Aeneisillustrationen in Handschriften des 15. Jahrhunderts. *The Two Worlds of the Poet: New Perspectives on Vergil*. Edited by Alexander G. McKay, Robert M. Wilhelm, and Howard Jones. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992, 408-432.

Wright, Alison. *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

---. "The Myth of Hercules." *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il Suo Mondo: Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Firenze, 9-13 giugno 1992)*. Edited by Gian C. Garfagnini. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1994, 323-339.

Yacobi, Tamar. "Pictorial Models and Narrative Ekphrasis." *Poetics Today*. 16.4 (1995): 599-649.

Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Zabughin, Vladimiro. *Vergilio nel Rinascimento Italiano da Dante a Torquato Tasso: Fortuna, Studi, Imitazioni, Traduzioni e Parodie, Iconografia*. Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1921.

Zanker, Paul, and Björn Christian Ewald. *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*. Translated by Julia Slater. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Ziolkowski, Jan M., and Michael C. J. Putnam. *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.